

CD-1 Rezoning: 1729-1735 East 33rd Avenue Public Hearing of 12 March 2013

Submitted by Joseph Jones on 11 March 2013

I have separately submitted one specific comment on 7 March 2013 in order to assist a city planner who was under time pressure to compile technical feedback. What follows is oriented to a broader picture.

Please observe that the following two sets of points are cast in the negative mode.

I do not oppose the project for the following reasons:

A. I have personal history with someone who hopes to live in the completed project and have therefore agreed not to oppose.

B. As the crow flies, I live half a mile away, a comfortable distance from the impact.

C. I attended the 17 October 2012 information session on the "interim rezoning policy" emanating from the Mayor's Task Force on Housing Affordability and witnessed a room filled with developers. It appears that, up to the present time, there have been only three subsequent applications found suitable to proceed to review, and one of those in Dunbar has just been judged as not sufficiently affordable. Up to twenty applications were to be entertained. The City of Vancouver appears desperate to find even one application that could go ahead. Experience says that any proposal that is allowed to go to public hearing may get a tweak, but that the dominant Vision Vancouver caucus has already applied the rubber stamp, and the supposed hearing acts as nothing but legal formality.

D. I have talked with several of the co-housing proponents and attended the 7 March 2013 open house, unusual for its timing just a few days ahead of public hearing. These are community-minded people and they would be a welcome addition to the local area.

I do not support the project for the following reasons:

A. The site location takes no account of the extensive planning that has gone into the immediately adjacent Norquay Village Neighbourhood Centre. The concept of a "neighbourhood centre" is that a local area develops a centre, with density decrease in a radius outward. In Vancouver, that sadly corrupted concept is proving nothing more than an excuse to mass rezone hundreds of acres at a single grab. The cynicism of this paragraph from the Norquay Village Neighbourhood Centre report to Council becomes ever more evident:

It should also be noted that by planning for new housing types in the neighbourhood centre, the existing RS-1 zoning is maintained for the majority of the surrounding areas. As a whole, RS zoning also remains the predominant zoning for the majority of the city (73 percent of residential land and 42 percent of all parcels).

[p. 19 < <http://former.vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk//20101104/documents/penv2.pdf> >]

B. Evidence mounts: four STIR projects just outside Norquay boundaries, dense redevelopment of 1.25 grassy acres at the Avalon dairy site just outside Norquay boundaries, and now this co-housing proposal just outside Norquay boundaries. What has masqueraded as planning in Norquay is clearly one piece of a politicized land-grab strategy that seeks nothing but naked opportunity wherever it may be found – like just outside the boundaries of a neighbourhood centre.

C. The Norquay area of East Vancouver is admitted by the City of Vancouver to be an amenity desert. The Norquay area has been a density dump for many decades with no rewards coming to the current 10,000 residents. New density is being dumped into and around Norquay with no provision for concurrent benefit or amenity. For elaboration and documentation of these assertions, read *By the Numbers* at < <http://eyeonnorquay.wordpress.com/2013/02/17/by-the-numbers/> > This project amounts to one more instance of density dumping.

D. This co-housing proposal has been sent to public hearing despite two successive non-support votes by the Urban Design Panel (24 Oct 2012 and 16 Jan 2013). If the project can't find support at UDP, something has to be wrong. It seems clear that property owners adjacent to the site would experience unfair impacts.

E. The economics of the project seem dubious. A cost of \$500 to \$550 per purchased square foot sounds high. The unusual built configuration provides few reasonable exit possibilities. This poses serious risk for project participants, for the directly affected locality, and for the City of Vancouver.

F. This looks like crass opportunism with no planning. There is something fundamentally wrong in going after one segment of a block of land (this particular one is bounded by Welwyn on west, E 32nd on north, Commercial on east, E 33rd on south) in an eclectic and variously parcelled neighborhood, and “taking out” that segment with no regard to immediate context, especially the segments remaining within that unusual and differently oriented block. See map following.

