

Kennett, Bonnie

From: Correspondence Group, City Clerk's Office
Sent: Tuesday, March 24, 2015 2:18 PM
To: Public Hearing
Subject: FW: Rezoning of 5037-5087 Main St; relocation assistance is inadequate

From: allan buium s.22(1) Personal and Confidential
Sent: Tuesday, March 24, 2015 1:35 PM
To: gregor.roberston@vancouver.ca; Affleck, George; Ball, Elizabeth; Carr, Adriane; Deal, Heather; De Genova, Melissa; Jang, Kerry; Louie, Raymond; Meggs, Geoff; Reimer, Andrea; Stevenson, Tim
Cc: Correspondence Group, City Clerk's Office
Subject: Rezoning of 5037-5087 Main St; relocation assistance is inadequate

March 23, 2015

Regarding rezoning of 5037, 5067 and 5087 Main Street:

Dear Mayor Robertson, Councilors,

We are writing to request that you not approve this proposed rezoning on account of the tenant relocation assistance plan, which in our view is inadequate and unacceptable.

The staff report states that the average current monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment in the existing buildings is \$1,102, and the average rent for an equivalent apartment in the area is \$1,318, a difference of \$216.

Terms of relocation offered by the proponent would require that the existing tenants be provided with three relocation options, at least one of which must be in the area. All three options must be at rates not more than 10% greater than the area average.

According to this formula, all three options for a two-bedroom apartment could rent for as much as \$1,457. That amounts to an average rent increase of \$355 per month. At that rate, the two months free rent on offer would be consumed in about 6 months, after which the tenants would be stuck with a huge increase that would likely soon be further inflated as statutory annual increases of 2% plus rate of inflation were applied.

In all probability rent increases of this magnitude would impose severe financial hardship on the existing tenants. Indeed, it may not be possible for some or all of them to pay these high rental rates. Under this plan they could be forced to leave the area, forced to leave Vancouver, or forced into homelessness.

We hope that you agree with us that such outcomes are not acceptable, especially as a consequence of a project that stands to make a handsome profit for the proponent—including 10% more density than the 2.30 allowed for in the rezoning policy—and will provide a cash Community Amenity Contribution for the City of Vancouver.

We therefore request that the relocation plan be revised to strike the reference to "10% above" and instead require that "All options provided would rent for no more than the average rent for the area (CMHC South East Vancouver as per Figure 4 above), unless otherwise agreed to by the tenant."

This change would cost the proponent little, if anything, as it would not require additional cash outlays for tenant compensation. It is a very modest request—probably too modest, since even "average" rates could increase their current rents by more than \$200, which may be beyond the ability of some to absorb.

The report recommends "a CAC of \$565,000 to be allocated to the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund to advance housing objectives either on the Little Mountain site or within the Riley Park South Cambie area." Indeed, we have been informed by City staff that they have been negotiating the acquisition of a parcel on the Little Mountain Housing site for about 90 social housing units additional to the 234 units to be provided by BC Housing as replacements for the 224 units that were vacated starting in 2007 and demolished starting in 2009. CACs from this and other rezonings in the quadrangle adjacent to Little Mountain will fund these additional units, which presumably will be owned by the City.

We therefore further request that the tenants displaced by this rezoning be given first right of refusal for these social housing units when they become available, either at rates equivalent to what they would pay if they had not been forced to leave their present homes, or at 30% of household income. If the social housing units funded by these CACs are built on a different site in the Riley Park area, then the same offer should stand. This option should not replace, but be additional to the option to rent at market rates minus 20% offered by the proponent.

Again, our requests are entirely reasonable, and the very least that a city administration that values compassion and community should countenance. Ensuring short-term relocation at rates no greater than the average, and a genuinely affordable long-term option, could provide a measure of financial relief and hope for these tenants that they might be able to remain in the area, or return in due course.

Mayor Robertson, provided you and your colleagues on Vancouver City Council and the proponent are willing to respond positively to our modest, sensible proposals, we will gladly drop our objections to this rezoning.

Sincerely,

Allan Buium, Chair

on behalf of the Riley Park South Cambie Community Visions Steering Committee.

Average current rent for 2 bedroom apt in existing buildings: \$1,102
Average current rent for 2 bedroom apt in area: \$1,318; + 10% =

Difference: \$216/ 457