

MOTION

5. Designate Mole Hill as a Heritage Conservation Area

At the Regular Council meeting on June 14, 2016, Vancouver City Council referred this matter to the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting on June 15, 2016, to hear from speakers.

MOVED by Councillor Carr
SECONDED by Councillor Deal

WHEREAS

1. Mole Hill, an area in Vancouver's West End bounded by Comox, Thurlow, Pendrell and Bute Streets, is a unique heritage area that includes a landscaped lane and 35 restored heritage homes, 30 of which are owned by the City of Vancouver and 30 of which are listed on the Vancouver Heritage Inventory—most of which were built between 1888 and 1908;
2. Over 15 years ago, City Council voted to partner with the Province, the Dr. Peter Foundation and the Mole Hill Community Housing Society to preserve the heritage homes and create affordable housing in Mole Hill, resulting in restoration of 28 heritage homes and provision of 178 units of rent-geared-to-income affordable housing and 24 health-care suites;
3. Despite winning prestigious local, provincial and national awards for heritage preservation and affordable housing, Mole Hill is not formally protected, and is vulnerable to development of the privately owned properties that could seriously compromise the entire aesthetics of Mole Hill as an intact heritage area;
4. Three privately owned Mole Hill properties on Comox Street have recently sold and are currently in various stages of redevelopment, with the potential through demolition, the addition of height, floor space and rear yard infill development, to impact the unique heritage character of Mole Hill;
5. The Mole Hill Community Housing Society, which manages 28 of the 30 City-owned properties there with a strong commitment to sustainability and heritage preservation, wrote to City of Vancouver Council and staff in November of 2015 requesting that the City designate Mole Hill as a Heritage Conservation Area, a request that has been followed up recently in correspondence to Council from many members of the Mole Hill community.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT City Council direct staff to report back, in consultation with local stakeholders and the Mole Hill Community Housing Society, on an initial assessment of Mole Hill's heritage value, the impact of designating the area as a Heritage Conservation Area and the suggested process for considering the designation of Mole Hill as a Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) including the timing of the process and impact on existing work schedules;

FURTHER THAT staff report back on the options for and implications of placing a moratorium on demolition and development approvals for the maximum period allowed under the Vancouver Charter, if a HCA designation is being pursued.