

MOTION ON NOTICE

7. Expediting an Elementary School for the Olympic Village Community – the City’s Role

Submitted by: Councillor Dominato

WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver, together with the Vancouver School Board (VSB), has long planned for a school to be built in the Olympic Village, to support the objectives of creating a diverse, vibrant community where individuals, families, and children can live and thrive;
2. The City of Vancouver’s Official Development Plan (ODP) for South East False Creek anticipated that an elementary school for the Olympic Village would be built in concert with other core amenities and, as one of several stated goals for the project, be in place by 2020;
3. Schedule A of the Southeast False Creek Official Development Plan (April 2007) includes numerous references to an elementary school, including:
 - Section 4.3.5 (*Cultural, recreational, and institutional uses*) states: “Development is to include the following facilities: **(a) one K-7 community elementary school having a floor area of at least 3 700 m² , and including a gymnasium in area 2A;**”
 - Section 4.4 (*Phasing of parks and community facilities*) states: “Phasing decisions for the parks, community centre and non-motorized boating centre, and other community facilities are to happen at the time of the applicable CD-1 re-zonings; and are to include **every effort to co-ordinate delivery of the elementary school** in a time frame compatible with the delivery of such other facilities.”;
 - Section 5.4.2 (*Area 2A – The central “shipyard” neighbourhood*) states: “... A cluster of community services via Front Street and the seaside greenway/bikeway are to connect to the community heart. Such services are to include a community centre combined with a non-motorized recreational boating facility and day care facility to animate the waterfront and **an elementary school, which may include more child care and after-school care, located within easy walking distance of the community centre and boating facility and beside the park that is to be large enough for a playfield.** The waterfront park near the school is to provide a community demonstration garden including garden plots and sustainability education lessons for children and adults.”
4. The development of the Southeast False Creek community was intended to be “a leading model of sustainable development” – a “complete neighbourhood” with goods and services within walking distance, and housing and jobs that are accessible by transit;

5. Southeast False Creek was designed as a mixed-use community, with a total population of 11,000 – 13,000 people, with a focus on residential housing;
6. The reasonable expectation that an elementary school would be in place for the Olympic Village community by 2020, as noted in the South East False Creek ODP, led many to choose the Olympic Village as a neighbourhood where they could build their lives and livelihoods and start families;
7. To date, an elementary school for the Olympic Village community has received neither approval nor funding from the provincial Ministry of Education;
8. The existing catchment school for the Olympic Village neighbourhood – Simon Fraser Elementary – is significantly overcapacity and receives nearly three times the in-catchment applications for kindergarten than it can handle;
9. The overcapacity conditions at Simon Fraser Elementary are forcing families to send students to schools well outside their neighbourhood, with students attending more than two dozen different schools throughout the city, exacerbating traffic congestion and air pollution in a city that strives to be the greenest city in the world while seriously undermining the human connections between students, friends, and neighbours that are the foundation of a healthy, thriving community;
10. Many other Olympic Village families are simply giving up on the prospect of a neighbourhood school being built in time for their children to attend and are therefore moving from the community to more established areas where there are existing schools – a loss to the Olympic Village community and to these young families alike;
11. In June 2018, Education Minister Rob Fleming stated that he wants to see the Vancouver school district build schools more quickly and noted that it takes longer to build schools in Vancouver – five years – than in other districts, such as Surrey, where it takes about three years;
12. In May 2018, the VSB considered a motion, brought forward by Trustee Lisa Dominato, calling on the City of Vancouver to fast-track development and building permits for Vancouver schools (new schools, replacements, additions, and renovations) by means of a “Nexus” style fast-track approval process – the motion failed narrowly in a tie vote;
13. There is currently no City of Vancouver policy that prioritizes applications for building and development permits for the Vancouver school district. The school district’s applications are processed alongside permit applications for all city developments including commercial, single family dwellings, laneways, condominium developments, housing projects, and community centres;

14. In May 2018, it reportedly took – on average – 12 months for the school district to receive a development permit and 8 months to receive a building permit for new and replacement schools, which added more than one year to school capital projects;
15. Last year, the VSB entered into an agreement with BC Hydro whereby a subsurface parcel at the Lord Roberts Annex site was sold to accommodate a much needed electrical substation in the West End / Downtown core;
16. A portion of the VSB proceeds from the Lord Roberts Annex site subsurface sale agreement with BC Hydro will go toward the capital cost of a new school in Coal Harbour, which means the Province has saved money on a capital expenditure and could re-allocate that funding to build an Olympic Village Elementary school;
17. In Year One of the VSB 2020/21 Capital Plan, the school district is seeking Ministry of Education approval for the acquisition of a school site for a South East False Creek / Olympic Village Elementary school;
18. It is crucially important that funding for an elementary school in Olympic Village be secured and made available as soon as possible to get the school project underway, and the City of Vancouver has various tools and potential options available within its jurisdictional domain to do its part and to help accomplish this longstanding goal for the South East False Creek community.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to create a “fast-track” process, on an urgent basis, whereby the approval of development and building permits for Vancouver schools (new schools, replacements, additions, and renovations) can be expedited to ensure that Vancouver school facilities can be built, replaced, added to, and/or renovated in a timely manner, to help build strong, diverse, sustainable neighbourhoods and communities in our city, with staff to report back to Council by January 2020 regarding actions taken in this regard.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to work with the Vancouver School Board staff to explore ways to work together on a collective basis to improve and streamline various City approval processes in pursuit of the timely construction, replacement, and/or renovation to Vancouver Schools, including an elementary school in Southeast False Creek / Olympic Village.
- C. THAT Council call on the Province to prioritize capital funds for a new school in South East False Creek / Olympic Village, on an urgent basis, acknowledging the pressing need for a school in this area, as well as the fact that the Vancouver School Board (VSB) is fully funding the new Coal Harbour school through proceeds from the Lord Roberts Annex site subsurface sale by the VSB to BC Hydro which relieves the Province of this related capital expense.

- D. THAT Council acknowledge its role and responsibility to ensure that there is adequate and appropriate space for the learning needs of our city's youngest residents, and that Council direct staff to explore the possibility of:
- i. Leasing the city-owned land in Southeast False Creek/ Olympic Village, on an urgent basis, to the Vancouver School Board for a nominal sum as a means to expedite construction of a long-anticipated elementary school in lieu of a direct acquisition through a sale or land transfer;
 - ii. Enabling the construction of a "modular school" if a lack provincial funding or other delays fail to address the school facility needs of the Southeast False Creek / Olympic Village neighbourhood in a timely manner.
- E. THAT a copy of this motion to be sent to the Trustees and Senior Staff of the Vancouver School Board.

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