

July 7, 2020 Public Hearing
re 1111-1123 Kingsway

Good evening, Mayor and Council.

I am Kelly Talayco. I've lived in Vancouver for over 40 years, within five blocks of this Kingsway site. I'm speaking tonight in opposition -- on the grounds that the City has not adequately communicated with residents.

I'm not talking about the legal requirements or standard procedures. I'm talking about clear, open communications that are in accord with the reality of the development approval process.

Let me explain.

I believe that in the past five years only two proposals that have reached the public hearing stage have been turned down -- 105 Keefer Street, by the previous council, and 4575 Granville by this council.

In that time, how many public hearings have been held and how many heartfelt, heartbreaking stories have been told? Consider the patterns.

Neighbouring residents have objected to proposals because of height, because they don't have the feel of the neighbourhood, because the building is overwhelming, because yards will be shaded, because views will be lost, because privacy will be invaded, because parking and transit will be problems and so on.

They've come to tell you that the proposal doesn't fit their Community Plan -- because of its scope or because they thought the plan protected their heritage street; or they feel tricked that an approved 4-5 storey building now has extra height on its roof; or that their East Van neighbourhood has had more than its share of development. They've brought petitions with hundreds of names; they've objected that the City has driven a poor bargain, receiving only a small number of units for low income tenants vs. many more units for higher income.

None of this has mattered, and in exchange for their efforts and sincerity, neighbours have often been trashed as selfish homeowners who only want to keep

the status quo. Their longtime neighbourhoods have been described as “boring” and in need of revitalization -- and they themselves have been lectured on neighbourliness. I recall the recent Larch Street hearing in which the words of Dr. Martin Luther King were used to scold and shame civic-minded speakers, to trivialize their concerns, and to obliquely hold them responsible for years of societal injustices.

I have come to see these public hearings as toxic environments.

In my view, the City has contributed to this toxicity by failing to clearly communicate just how urgently Council is addressing Vancouver’s housing crisis.

The pandemic has shown us the kind of **reality-based communications** that are essential in a crisis, and these are:--

- Clear communication of the facts and supporting data
- Brief, simple explanations of issues and terminology
- Regular and frequent progress reports from respected authorities
- Easy access to essential information at the public’s fingertips

Applied to the housing crisis, we need among other things:

- 1) A prominent bullet on the City’s home page highlighting the crisis and linking to a dashboard of essential information -- as is done now re COVID
- 2) Accurate figures on population projections, housing targets at all levels, and progress made in each category.
- 3) The familiar FAQ sheet explaining, for example, that East Vancouver will always bear the brunt of development because its land is cheaper than on the West side.
- 4) Corrected versions of plans such as MIHRPP, clarifying that criteria such as “building form and neighbourhood fit” are decided by professional planners, not by residents -- just as it is professional planners who interpret the clauses of neighbourhood plans and vision statements.
- 5) Corrected terminology. The MIHRPP program is not a pilot project in the sense of a pilot on electronic scooters -- which, if it doesn’t work, can be discontinued in short order. The MIHRPP developments, in contrast, **change neighbourhoods forever**. It would better reflect reality to call these “**Phase One**” prototypes, rather than pilots.

In summary --

The reality is that if you are to meet your targets, you **MUST** approve every development that the Planners have determined meet the necessary criteria. And how can one deny that the number and type of developments will create radically different neighbourhoods and a different city overall? Vancouver citizens need to realize this.

The City must repeatedly proclaim the urgency of our housing crisis and the seriousness with which City Council is acting to address it.

Explicit, factual information would let residents know that:--

-- **“Nothing that comes to your neighbourhood should surprise you --**

and

-- **You should EXPECT massive change,** both now, as we address housing issues and in the near future as the City Plan unfolds.”

This **REALITY** has not been sufficiently communicated to Vancouver residents, and I therefore register my objection to the proposed project.

END