



City of Prince Rupert

MINUTES

For the **PUBLIC HEARING** held on September 14th, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 424 - 3rd Avenue West, Prince Rupert, B.C.

PRESENT: Mayor L. Brain
Councillor B. Mirau
Councillor B. Cunningham
Councillor W. Niesh
Councillor G. Randhawa
Councillor N. Kinney
Councillor J. Thorkelson

STAFF: R. Long, City Manager
C. Bomben, Chief Financial Officer
R. Mandryk, Corporate Administrator
Z. Krekic, City Planner

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the Public Hearing of September 14th, 2015 to order at 7:00 p.m. The Mayor read the Statement of Chair on the Procedures for the Public Hearing.

2. PROPOSED QUALITY OF LIFE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN AMENDMENT BYLAW NO. 3373, 2015 AND PROPOSED ZONING AMENDMENT BYLAW NO. 3374, 2015 TO CHANGE FROM RESIDENTIAL TO ALLOW M1 LIGHT INDUSTRIAL ZONE AT 180 – 6TH AVENUE EAST - TO USE A PORTION OF THE MASONIC LODGE FOR STORAGE.

a) City Planner's Report of September 9th, 2015.

In addition to this report, the City Planner made a comment regarding the Masonic Hall currently sitting vacant and becoming a liability, as occurs with closed schools and churches in the city. He added, the City has done all it can to accommodate the process of zoning for the proposed application, and conducted a review of all possible types of zoning that might be applied.

A Public Information Meeting was performed and all concerns raised have been addressed by the applicant as noted within the report from the City Planner.

b) As at the date of the City Planner's Report of September 9th, 2015, there has been:

- no inquiries over the counter;

- 6 written communications; and
- 6 additional written communications prior to commencement of this meeting.

The Mayor read the Statement of the Chair to the Public on the procedures for the Public Hearing being held for this rezoning application.

c) Public asked to provide comments.

Mr. James Edward of West 811 Fraser Street, Treasurer for the Masonic Hall, came forward and reported that the additional revenue that would be generated from leasing part of the Masonic Hall is needed for the upkeep of their 1932 building and specifically for necessary upgrades inside and outside. As a representative of the membership of the Masonic Hall, he reported that they are in support of this application and look forward to working with the neighbourhood.

Mr. Rob Eby of 1859 Sloan Avenue and business address of 150 First Avenue West came before Council to give further details to his application. He reported that there is currently no sufficient warehouse rental space available within Prince Rupert. Expanding his business is of benefit to the people of Prince Rupert as well as to the City by way of increased taxation as a result of property improvements. In regard to surrounding residential property values, Steve Callis, a property appraiser from Terrace informed Mr. Eby that there was no way of knowing for certain if the property values would go up or down as a result of this application.

Mr. Eby indicated that the East side of the building on Bowser Street is the most suitable area of the building to provision the loading dock. Mr. Eby reported that the Building Inspector identified the necessary provisions prior to approval of any zoning application which includes, playground safety, speed, back-up beepers, restrictive covenant as to use, no trucks between 8pm to 8am, and the volume of trucks. Mr. Eby addressed all of these concerns, as well as the issue of trucks backing into the loading docks with a swamper and employee to assist with backing up. Delivery trucks would be in and out of the warehouse approximately 3 times a day, depending on the number of deliveries.

Mr. Michael Kenneth Calli, 1234 7th Avenue West, Educator and Masonic Member, read a letter from Mr. Ferguson of Ferguson Funeral Home Ltd. indicating that they have no issue with the proposed rezoning change.

Ms. Jean Iris Page of 245 6th Avenue East is opposed to this rezoning application. Safety at Moose Tot Park was identified as her main concern. Ms. Page described that in her opinion McBride and 6th is a very busy intersection and increased truck volume will increase accidents. It is currently a residential area with a high number of school children who walk in this neighbourhood and access the playground.

Mr. Dave McKeever, 905 Comox Avenue, provided his support to this rezoning application. He attended the public meeting held by the Applicant and had a tour of the building, both the space to be occupied by MacKenzie's Furniture and the upper

floor of the Masonic Hall. Mr. McKeever felt that local business owners need to be supported in growing their business.

Mr. Tom Chang of 1539 Overlook, with business address of 716 Fraser Street supports this rezoning application and feels the Masonic Hall building is underutilized. MacKenzies is a reputable business in need of warehouse space which is very scarce in this town. This is a win/win situation between MacKenzie Furniture and the Masonic Hall.

Councillor Thorkelson asked Mr. Chang how many businesses came forward to him and inquired about warehouse space and of what size of warehouse space might be most sought after.

Mr. Chang reported that he has had a substantial number of business owners approach him for building space with requests of 10,000 sq feet and up. Currently there are no such storage opportunities for any of these businesses. Larger industries would require a minimum of 10,000 and up to 100,000 sq ft buildings, with small construction companies needing approximately 5-10,000 sq ft facilities.

Mr. Douglas McLoud of 301 6th Ave East is opposed to this rezoning application primarily due to all the various traffic concerns and secondly that this is a troublesome precedent possibly being set. He does not want to see a patchwork of Light Industrial Zoned properties scattered throughout the residential areas of the city and the landscape of what this would eventually look like. He suggested that Council should be looking for land that developers can get into with their business that does not impede on residential properties.

Mr. Kent Andrew Orton of 266 9th Avenue East, a Masonic member, is in support of the application. The income will provide opportunity to fix up the building. He is also a dad with children that play at Moose Tot Park every week and he does not believe that approval of this application would cause his children to be unsafe.

Mr. Bob Thompson of 108 7th Avenue East provided a letter to Council which was included in Council's information packages. Mr. Thompson worked at City Hall for 33 years and has lived in the neighbourhood for the same number of years with 3 children spending a lot of time in the park. Mr. Thompson reported that safety for children is already of high concern. By adding a business of this nature it will only serve to increase accidents involving children. Ms. Thompson said that residential streets for local area residents are not created for large industrial trucks to try and maneuver within, and backing up these trucks logistically will be very difficult with drivers having poor lower level sight visibility. The current demographics of this area are ideal for repopulation of young families. Allowing commercial enterprises to develop in residential zones creates issues. Other uses besides light industrial would be a much better use for this property.

Councillor Thorkelson asked Mr. Thompson what his suggestions might be about solving Mr. Eby's and Mr. Chang's client's storage needs.

Mr. Thompson further suggested that Prince Rupert needs to have light industrial space and that there are locations that would work not far from the existing light industrial park which should be discussed in another forum as it would involve 3rd party negotiations. Mr. Thompson was of the opinion that approving zoning applications of this nature are patchwork measures and not the solution, as the city will run out of the few churches or halls available.

Mr. Thompson also suggest that East of the existing Industrial Park along the highway is where the City should consider developing a light industrial park. A request to the Provincial Government for help in expanding the light and heavy industrial areas is needed. Looking at 3rd party proponents or the government to partner with developing the area East of the existing Industrial Park is highly possible as well as the land along Ridley Island Road.

Mr. Chris Procter of 1425, with a business address of 741 Fraser Street, is the Head of the Masonic Association. He has been looking for a tenant for a number of years, and having met with various business owners of daycare, offices, mechanical shop, etc. Mackenzies Furniture was the only business that expressed an interest in the property with little expense required to accommodate the change in use. Mr. Procter was of the opinion that this business venture will save the Masonic building. Mr. Procter addressed the safety issue as this is also their highest priority as no one wants to see an accident.

Councillor Cunningham asked what his feedback has been from the immediate neighbours around the Masonic Hall.

Mr. Procter reported that he had talked with individuals within every home surrounding the building including those directly behind the building and all are in favour of the rezoning application with the exception of a previous speaker this evening.

Mr. Brian Eby of 611 4th Avenue East is related to the owner of Mackenzies Furniture and spoke in favour of the rezoning application. He reported that in Mackenzies current location, which they have occupied since 1978, there has been no local opposition nor difficulty backing into their loading bays which proves much more difficult with heavy traffic on 1st Avenue than it might be at the Masonic Hall. He also reported that the residents in the back of the Masonic building are currently buffered by 29 feet of their property which is overgrown with greenery that will not be touched, and assists in adding additional safety.

Mr. Eby spoke of the business history of Mackenzies Furniture and the Eby family's ongoing commitment throughout the tough years. They would like to continue helping to create a viable self-supporting community by increasing their retail by 50% to increase customer selection at more competitive prices. Mr. Eby petitioned the Council to now commit to helping their business and to help the Masonic Association. The speaker demonstrated what the new store will look like.

Mr. Michael Kenneth Calli, 1234 7th Avenue West, Educator and Masonic Member, again approached Council speaking on his own behalf as a resident and Free Mason for the past 25 years. He continues to help community members through his private technical school, offering free training for those who can't afford it. Mr. Calli was of the opinion that if Prince Rupert is going to grow we have to allow for expansion. Mr. Calli believes that the underlying opposition is fear of change. He wanted to start a development in the Cow Bay area many years ago, however investors reported the city had too many bylaws and other difficulties, making development opportunities unfavourable, which Mr. Calli believes attributed to the recession. He urged Council to lighten up and open up areas to allow for change and growth. The Masonic Hall property is just one of those changes and opportunities for growth.

Ms. Elaine Marie Hupman of 545 7th Avenue East is opposed to the rezoning application. She is the mother of 3 children and has lived in Prince Rupert all her life. Two of her children are very active and attend Moose Tot Park every day. Her greatest concern is traffic safety. As a child she was hit by a vehicle and suggested she is lucky to be speaking to Council today. She has worked with children all her life and is of the opinion that it takes only an instant for a child to lose focus and be the subject of an accident.

Ms. Hupman noted that a fence at the back is being proposed, and asked if there will be a fence all along the side of the property where the walking trail that the children use is located? It was confirmed that there will be a fence along the back as well as along the side between the trucks backing up and the trail that is used.

Ms. Hupman would like Council to keep residential areas strictly as residential for the sake of families and the community. She is all for business growth and change but not to be moved into residential areas. She noted that there are many vacant buildings in the downtown core that could be used for storage.

The Mayor called three times for any further speakers.

3. ADJOURN PUBLIC HEARING

MOVED by Councillor Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Kinney that the meeting be adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

CARRIED

Confirmed:

These meeting Minutes were adopted by Council. To view signed original, visit City Hall Administration or contact via phone 250-627-0934 or email Cityhall@princerupert.ca

MAYOR

Certified Correct:

CORPORATE ADMINISTRATOR