

Wednesday, October 24, 2007

Turning Point Recovery Society (1984)

**Re: Minutes of Neighbourhood Consultation Meeting
South Arm Community Centre, October 24, 2007**

Present: Neighbourhood: Kathy, Barb K, Walter, Kevin, Bob, Shawn,
Barbara R., Yvette
TPRS: Brenda Plant, Val Nay
Consultants: Jack Clerkson, Project Consultant
Anthony Boni, Project Architect

Introduction and Welcome: Brenda Plant – Executive Director, Turning Point

Brenda opened the meeting by introducing a new neighbourhood member, Yvette .

Brenda apologized to the NLC for any confusion that the recent demolition activity on the Ash Street property may have caused. Turning Point had been in consultation with a construction company regarding demolition and hazmat removal and unfortunately it appears that one of the subcontractors pre-empted the work order. The intention is, and has always been, to inform the neighbourhood prior to any new activity at the site.

Demolition Status

In consultation with BC Housing and with a recommendation from the Richmond Police Department, the house on Ash Street will be demolished this month. With respect to the sensitivities of the neighbourhood, Turning Point had hoped to put off demolition of the structure for as long as possible. Unfortunately there have been four or five break-ins recently and vandals have stolen and/or destroyed virtually everything in the house, including all metal and copper. This was evidently becoming a safety concern, especially due to the possibility of a fire. So, the decision was ultimately made to demolish the building.

The demolition of the current house is needed whether Turning Point's proposal is approved or not. It is an important action to ensure safety on the site and for the neighbourhood.

This week a demolition crew has been on the property removing all hazardous materials, including asbestos, in preparation for the demolition. The demolition

equipment could be on site as early as Friday, Nov. 2nd. A notification of the demolition will be included in a letter to neighbours.

Fencing has also been placed around the perimeter of the site to protect the trees and to discourage trespassers. Turning Point is committed to trying to save as many of the trees as possible, and plans to replace those that have to be taken down. Some of the trees and smaller shrubs may have to be removed as part of the demolition, but the majority of trees will not be affected.

We are hopeful that with the demolition of the house there will be no more vandalism on the site. Our redevelopment sign was also recently destroyed, which we have had replaced at a cost of \$350.

Revised Proposal and Density, Anthony Boni

In response to the NLC's concerns, those raised by the City, and from the community at large, Turning Point has reduced the density on the site from 40 beds to 32 beds (18,000 sq.ft. to 14,700 sq.ft.). The revised proposal consists of:

- One eight-bedroom residence with up to ten beds for men who are actively engaged in recovery;
- One eight-bedroom residence with up to ten beds for women who are actively engaged in recovery;
- One affordable housing residence containing the following:
 - Ten small studio suites (on average approximately 325 to 450 square feet each) for persons engaged and advanced in their recovery who are integrating back into society. Up to four suites will be devoted to serving mothers with infants.
 - One two-bedroom suite will be devoted solely to serving a mother with a young child or children.
 - One, one-bedroom suite will be occupied by a live-in 24/7 on-site manager.

This new density conforms to Richmond's R-2 zoning.

The drawings presented at the NLC meeting tonight will be revised (taking NLC feedback into consideration) before final submission to the City. Turning Point welcomed the group's feedback and suggestions.

Recovery Houses - Front Buildings

In consultation with the City, the parking lot at the centre of the site will be accessed from the lane (City property), thereby alleviating any concerns about traffic congestion at the Ash St. intersection. The lane will not be a thoroughfare, there will be bollards restricting access to Dayton Court.

To complement the neighbouring properties, the houses will be built at the City's standard set-back. Care is being taken to give each house its own "identity" and to have them seamlessly fit into their surroundings. Aside from the fact that Turning Point's houses do not have front garages, they should blend in seamlessly.

Each house at the front will be 3,300 sq.ft. and have eight bedrooms. The ground floors will each have a living room, and two bedrooms (one of the bedrooms and a bathroom will be handicap accessible). There will be four single bedrooms and two larger bedrooms (to accommodate up to two people) on the second floors.

Modelled after our Vancouver location, one of the houses will have a commercial kitchen and a dining room for up to 20 people. This room will be used between meals as a group meeting space. The other house will contain Turning Point's offices.

An enclosed walkway will connect the two buildings. This walkway is mandated by the Community Care Facilities Licensing program at Vancouver Coastal Health. The NLC members also had concerns about the walkway. Turning Point will see if it's possible through landscaping, to minimize the visual impact of the walkway. Some of the NLC members inquired about writing letters to VCH – Licensing to express their concerns. It was determined that it would be an individual decision about whether or not to write letters to Licensing.

Based on feedback from the NLC, Turning Point will also ensure that there is one staff member awake 24/7 on site.

Affordable Supportive Housing – Back Building

The supportive housing units in the back of the property will be home to approximately 12 Richmond residents who are in need of affordable, abstinence-based housing. It is a single building, approximately 7,800 sq.ft. There are ten studios, one, one-bedroom unit and one, two-bedroom unit. The 2 bedroom suite is earmarked for a woman with up to a maximum of 2 children. The one bedroom unit is dedicated to a live-in resident manager.

In accordance with the City's request, the setback of the rear building will be 24 ft from the back edge of the property. Working with a landscape architect, Turning Point will attempt to keep as many trees as possible.

The ground floor will accommodate a common space, laundry room and a patio. Because the back of this building may be visible from the Dayton Court cul-de-sac, special attention has been given to making the *back* of the building look more like a *front* of a building.

Concern: Most of the trees on site are deciduous and afford no privacy in the winter.

Response: Our landscaper will look into coniferous choices.

Concern: The cedar hedging along the north fence should go all the way to the end of the property, and not stop in the middle, to give the neighbours (us) the privacy

Response: The landscape architect is revising the plans to extend the hedging to the end of the fence at the east end of the property.

Concern: The windows in the sides and backs of the buildings will lessen privacy for the neighbours.

Response: This would also be the case if someone else chose to build on the site. Possible remedies could include planting cedar hedging to minimize views. The architect will review this when making design revisions.

Concern: What is being done about the different elevations on the property and how will it affect the trees that are there?

Response: The City requires the property at the front to be at grade. Fill will be used under the new buildings. The back apartment will sit a little lower than the front buildings. A retaining wall will also be built along part of the north side of the property in order to save existing trees.

Concern: It is important that the property looks nice. Many of the existing trees on the site are ugly and/or dying.

Response: Turning Point has consulted an arborist who has identified which trees need replacing. Turning Point is committed to making the property look well-kept and has incorporated plans for garden plots on the site.

Concern: What will be the height of the fencing surrounding the property?

Response: The City specifies height requirements for fences. We believe that the fence would be 6 ft high, measured from the highest property grade.

Concern: In September some members of the NLC advised that a nine bed facility would be preferred, other members advised that they would accept up to 20 beds. Most members reported that they did not want the residence in the back of the property because of density.

Response: Turning Point has listened closely to our Neighbourhood Liaison Committee and the community at large and has reduced the number of beds for our residents from 40 to 32 - a 20 per cent decrease. This brings the proposal in line with the residential density in the Ash Street area.

General Property

The number of parking stalls has been reduced from 11 to 9 spaces, in accordance with City guidelines and the Traffic Study obtained by Turning Point.

The laneway will look similar to how it looks now. We will not be using asphalt to pave the driveway and parking lot; we're looking at different types of pavers. We will be replacing the chain-link fence bordering the lane and will upgrade the fencing of the neighbours who parallel the laneway.

Concern: Will these buildings conform to Power Smart principles?

Response: Our site is too small to be officially certified under the LEED program but our designs will meet or surpass certification standards. Our aim is the "silver" designation.

Concerns: The building in the back will be the largest building in the neighbourhood. With such opposition to the project, why do you need the density to be so high?

Response: Our mandate is to provide support recovery beds and affordable supportive housing units in a safe and cost-effective way - that means maximizing the best use of the land. We believe that if Turning Point is unsuccessful in its bid, some other agency with similar density requirements will take its place.

Concern: The roof line of the back housing will be visible from the Dayton Court cul-de-sac, lots of people will have a view of the back property. Turning Point wants to maximize density; the neighbours want the project to fit it.

Response: The back building is the same height as surrounding buildings. We think once an actual model is built of the proposed buildings, neighbours will be better able to see it from all angles and elevations, as well as in relation to neighbouring houses.

Concerns: Turning Point is now using the term "affordable housing" with respect to the back building – have the criteria changed?

Response: No, affordable housing is simply a better way to explain the purpose of the back house. Originally Turning Point had said "transitional housing" and this is essentially the industry term. It's for Richmond residents who are in active recovery, but not necessarily from Turning Point. Rents will be in the \$350/\$425 range. According to Richmond Addiction Services there are currently 183 clients on the wait-list for supportive housing. These people must have completed at least 90 days in recovery, and must continue to be engaged in counselling and/or other recovery activities while living in our units.

Concern: In a recent Richmond Health Services report to the City, the report stated there was no need for additional recovery beds in Richmond.

Response: No. The report didn't say there was no need for more beds; the information about recovery beds was inadvertently omitted from the report. We have brought it to their attention and they will be resubmitting their report. We will make copies available as soon as we get them.

Concern: Before we understood that the house in back was for Turning Point people in transition, now you say they're not your people. Won't these residents have a lot of visitors, and won't it be difficult to evict them if there are problems?

Response: Turning Point will be operating the back housing units. Priority will be given to "graduating" Turning Point clients. All residents must comply with our rules and regulations. The B.C. Residential Tenancy Act does not apply to this type of supportive housing.

Next Steps

Turning Point has scheduled three open houses to be held in the gymnasium at DeBeck Elementary School:

*Thursday, November 22 4:30-6:30 pm
Monday, November 26 6:00-9:00 pm
Thursday, November 29 4:30-6:30 pm

At the Open House we will have a completed model of the proposed buildings, the architectural drawings, and different stations set up to answer all questions. We are hoping these open houses will be non-confrontational information sessions. Comment sheets will be available there for the public to fill in. We will ensure that all comments will all be presented to Council as part of our complete presentation.

The first reading by City Council on Turning Point's proposal will not be until the New Year. At this meeting the City will have received a full staff report on our proposal and they will then either vote the proposal down or send it to a public hearing. After a public hearing, the proposal will then go to a second reading.

Brenda once again extended an invitation for everyone to come meet our residents and see our operations, at either our Richmond or Vancouver location. She is very concerned about the misinformation that is circulating regarding Turning Point, and hopes that many of the people who have signed the petition will come to the open house and learn first-hand what Turning Point is about.

A news release is being issued to the media tomorrow to announce the reduction in density.

We will also be notifying the neighbours about the density reduction and the upcoming demolition at the site.

Thank you for attending tonight's meeting. Your comments are valuable and appreciated.

Meetings ended at 8:45 pm.

**Please note that the dates for the Open Houses have been amended; the new dates are as follows:*

- Thursday, November 22, 2007 from 4:30 to 6:30 pm
- Saturday, November 24, 2007 from 1:30 to 4:30 pm
- Monday, November 26, 2007 from 5:00 to 9:00 pm