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New Monaco moves forward with rezoning application and public consultation

Editor

News

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The New Monaco neighbourhood development project moved closer to adoption last week as Peachland council unanimously approved readings of various bylaws that will now require further public consultation before advancing further in the process.

Specifically, Peachland council:

- Gave second reading to a bylaw that creates the CD-10 New Monaco neighbourhood comprehensive development zone;
- Gave first and second reading to a bylaw to amend the Official Community Plan (OCP) to create the New Monaco neighbourhood development permit area;
- Gave first and second reading to a bylaw to establish the Phased Development Agreement (PDA) for the development of the New Monaco neighbourhood; and
- Passed a resolution to forward all three bylaws to public hearing.

The New Monaco property stretches across 125 acres at the junction of Highway 97 and Highway 97-C on Peachland's northeastern boundary.

Back in 2011 New Monaco received Peachland council's unanimous approval of an Area Sector Plan (ASP) and incorporation of that plan into Peachland's Official Community Plan (OCP). The OCP amendment allows for the development of a mix of approximately 2,800 residential units, in addition to substantial commercial and retail space that will build out over the next 15 – 20 years, depending on market conditions.

The Area Sector Plan (ASP) and OCP amendment establish the overall concept plan and density of the project.

According to the bylaw agreements, new infrastructure for the neighbourhood, such as extension of sanitary sewer and water mains and the road network, will be provided by the developer of the property at no cost to the district.

In addition, the developer will be required to pay Development Cost Charges (DCCs) at the building permit stage, as well as Community Amenity Contributions (CACs) and Housing Opportunities Reserve Fund Contributions at the time of building permit (except for residential buildings greater than 15,000 square feet in size, which will be payable at time of occupancy permit).

Development Servicing Agreements that will address servicing costs, the infrastructure phasing plan and security requirements, will be met later in the process, during the infrastructure construction and development process.

Over the past few years the developer has held numerous public consultation meetings about the project, most recently last October. Prior to coming before council for third reading, the community will have an opportunity to find out more information from the developer at a public information meeting on May 7 and provide their input at a public hearing that will be held on May 20.

Over the past two years the developer has been recruiting tenants, developing strategic partnerships and doing site planning work and is now ready to move forward.

The first phases of the project will focus around the creation of the village core, with commercial and retail

buildings as well as village-oriented residential units, followed later by additional residential units, a hotel and community amenities.

The CD-10 New Monaco neighbourhood comprehensive development zone was given first reading by council on November 26, 2013. Since then district staff have continued to work with the developer to advance the project forward to this stage.

The CD-10 zone permits residential density in the village and central neighbourhood areas to be exchanged for commercial density at ratios defined within the zone and will require Affordable Housing and Community Amenity Contributions be made to the District of Peachland in exchange for the ability to develop the site to increased densities.

The Phased Development Agreement (PDA) and a preliminary outline of the New Monaco Development Permit (DP) Guidelines have been negotiated concurrently with the CD-10 zoning bylaw. The terms of the agreement include:

- The developer will complete a parks master plan to the approval of the district prior to approval of any new subdivision plan, which will secure public park areas and a comprehensive network of trails and mixed use pathways throughout the neighbourhood to compliment the density anticipated in each area;
- The developer will pay Community Amenity Contributions at the time of building permit for buildings less than 15,000 square feet in size and prior to issuance of occupancy permits for those greater than 15,000 square feet in size;
- The developer will contribute \$1,000 to the district's reserve fund for affordable housing per market-built unit constructed; and
- The developer will adhere to fire and life safety requirements for high rise buildings as provided by the fire chief.

Following approval of the DP guidelines, the CD-10 zoning bylaw, the PDA and restrictive covenants to address infrastructure servicing issues, individual Development Permits, Development Servicing Agreements, subdivision applications and building permits will be required as the development proceeds.

Councillor Terry Condon offered support for the staff recommendations to council but queried the agreement with the developer to contribute \$1,000 to the district's affordable housing reserve fund rather than the existing requirement of developers to provide 10 per cent affordable housing.

“Does that compare with money value at the previous 10 per cent of the development that is our current policy and if anyone else has previously contributed on that basis, how do we make them equal in terms of the way that we're dealing with New Monaco or provide them with rationale that they don't necessarily need to be equal?” Councillor Condon asked.

“I don’t think that the agreements made in this document change our existing policy. This is a negotiated item that we’ve come to with a very large developer so that doesn’t mean all future developments would have the benefit of the same kind of policy changes,” chief administrative officer Elsie Lemke said.

Councillor Eric Hall said he believes with this document they are on the right track.

“I think we’ve debated affordable housing in great detail and it’s a problem issue and \$1,000 per unit to me is a reasonable and simple way of dealing with it in as much as we’re trying to do something without burdening ourselves with complicated legal agreements so I totally agree with that,” Councillor Hall said. “With a very complicated agreement like this, to me, we should be concerned about protecting the interests of Peachland residents and the developer is looking after their own interests, so it is coming together. To me, what’s been very important throughout the whole process I feel in this case is that the developer has been very open, very reasonable and I have confidence that if there are issues in the future we would be able to reach a reasonable agreement. I have trust in this developer and I think that is very important.”

Director of planning and development services Cory Gain said the district would like to provide the ability to have a variety of housing types, such as flex units and multiple-family units and this approach to achieving affordable housing will help provide a variety of housing in the long run.

“What we’re trying to do is get away from the cookie cutter approach of 10 per cent that had sort of been used over the last decade and move to something a little more progressive, where we start to influence the mix of housing that exists in the community so that the market itself provides a variety of housing types,” Gain said.

Gain went on to say that over the last decade the district has never actually received any units under the 10 per cent affordable housing contribution approach.

“The New Monaco project itself includes types of affordable housing, in addition to the \$1,000 per door,” Mayor Keith Fielding said, adding that secondary suites, for example, will be incorporated into the design. “I think this is an amazing accomplishment and I’m really looking forward to this unfolding. I think Councillor Hall was absolutely correct when he said you’ve done an amazing job of consulting all along with the community.”

“I’m excited about the affordable housing concept,” Councillor Peter Schierbeck said. “I’ve been looking for a definition for affordable housing ever since I’ve been with council and I’ve never had one that I was happy with and you’ve put a definition on it with \$1,000, which I’m excited to hear.”

Councillor Schierbeck also expressed his enthusiasm about the possibility of increased commercial space at New Monaco.

“As to the ideas of the densities being exchanged from residential for commercial, if there is enough room for New Monaco to find that there are excess people looking for commercial space, I think this is beneficial for our community, which has very, very little commercial space at this time. I’m sure that their ability to sell it is based on demand so if there is demand out there, I think that is excellent,” Councillor Schierbeck said.

Councillor Hall told his colleagues the development will be good for Peachland’s economy.

“This community is short of jobs, so commercial is what we want and what we need so to me any encouragement for companies to come to this development is just wonderful. I have total confidence that this is the right direction in terms of what the community needs. We need good paying jobs and this development is promising to supply them,” Councillor Hall said. “I think people in Peachland just can’t wait to see that hotel close to the 97-C, particularly in winter when people are coming from Vancouver. They are going to come down that hill and drive straight into that hotel.”

“I’m excited about this development and I think we should proceed with it,” Councillor Eldon Kerbes said.

Kerbes also expressed support for exchanging residential units to help bring more commercial space to Peachland.

New Monaco vice president of development Mark Holland said the village experience part of the project is essential to attracting commercial tenants and achieving the density required to make the development viable, so the developers intend to have a very hands-on role with that important initial area of the neighbourhood.

“It is our belief that this project will not be successful unless the village experience is as we’ve jointly created, the quality pedestrian oriented European village,” Holland said, adding that New Monaco would want to build the village themselves, while other developers may become involved with the residential buildings, for example.

Councillor Vern Moberg moved the motion to proceed with the readings as recommended by staff.

“I really look forward to going to public hearing and getting the public’s comment on it,” Councillor Moberg said. “I feel confident in the staff we have that this will come together and I would be in favour of moving it.”

A public information meeting hosted by New Monaco will take place on May 7 from 3:30 p.m. – 7 p.m. at the Peachland Visitor Centre. A public hearing will take place on May 20 at 7 p.m. at the Peachland Community Centre gymnasium.

Joanne Layh / Peachland View



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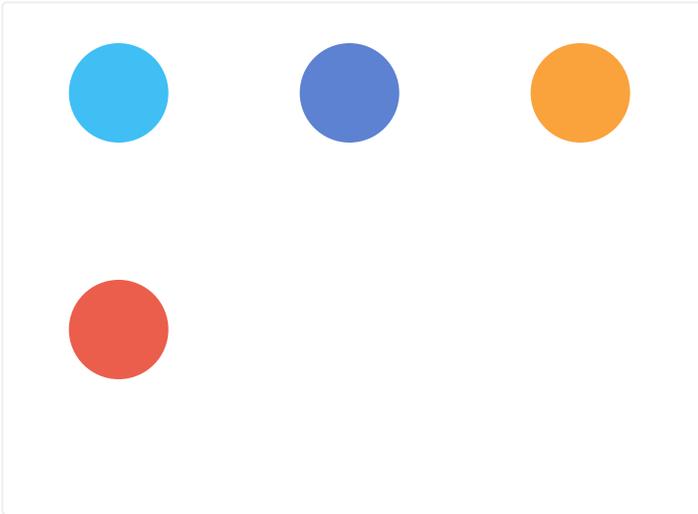


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