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To: Council
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Dear Mayor and Council:

I know I've left it rather late to weigh in on the proposed amendments to the Official Community Plan, but I do have some concerns and thoughts that I hope will be given consideration.

Given that food security is of increasing concern, and is specifically mentioned in the proposed OCP, everywhere that residential, commercial, and mixed-use development policies mention minimizing the casting of shadows/shading on the private outdoor space of adjacent residential units, there should be a "right to sunlight" policy for all vegetable gardens and fruit trees, indicating that they require particular protection. Under section 3.1 support for farmer's markets and community gardens is particularly mentioned, but support for private back yard and balcony gardens is not mentioned.

BC Hydro rates are set to increase substantially over the next few years, and demand on the electrical grid is increasing due to electrification of vehicles among other things. Therefore, everywhere that OCP residential, commercial, and mixed-use policies mention minimizing the casting of shadows/shading on the private outdoor space of adjacent residential units, further language should be added that disallows building in such a way that sunlight is blocked from reaching either existing solar panels or (thinking of the future) solar panel appropriate roofs.

Protection from shadowing/shading by new developments is really, really important to me personally. I would be very upset if someone was allowed to build anything that blocks light to my garden beds. Also, we have old electric baseboard heat (already \$\$\$!), and we want to eventually install solar panels.

Re: Section 6.1. The by-law amendment created to allow the development at Sussex/Saunders/Nelson streets up to 21 storeys should not be incorporated into the main body of the OCP as a new Land Use Designation (Commercial/Commercial Mixed-Use – Tall). That new by-law should only apply to the lots it was created for.

There was such backlash from the discovery that the Carlton Terrace development building height proposal would slip through a loophole (no policy regarding building height/storeys on Commercial/Commercial Mixed-Use designated lots) that council has addressed it by adding the “up to 12 storeys” language to the proposed “Commercial/Commercial Mixed-Use” land use designations in the amended 2025 OCP. What is the point of that if you’re also adding a new “Tall” land use designation? If yet another tower is proposed, residents want to have the opportunity for full participation in making a decision regarding approval or denial, and I don’t think that will happen if policy allowing up to 21 storeys already exists anywhere in the OCP. There would be nothing stopping developers from going to council and asking that whatever lot they want to develop be re-designated “Commercial/Commercial Mixed-Use – Tall”.

On another topic, it’s possible that I missed it, but with all of the talk of “affordable housing” is affordable housing clearly defined anywhere in the OCP? If it is not, it probably should be. Aren’t housing costs of no more than 30% of gross monthly income the landmark for affordability? I’m sure you’ve noticed the huge discrepancy between what is being *labelled* “affordable” and what actually *is* affordable these days when it comes to housing. If Esquimalt truly wants to attract and retain families, we shouldn’t be trying to mould families that need housing into a smaller, more crowded, less private, more cheaply constructed housing type, but rather we should make the housing type that families logically desire fit their incomes. Subsidize.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

Susan
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