



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

Municipal Hall
1229 Esquimalt Road
Esquimalt, B.C. V9A 3P1

Staff Report

File #:16-022

REQUEST FOR DIRECTION

DATE: January 4, 2016

Report No. DEV-16-003

TO: Laurie Hurst, Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Bill Brown, Director of Development Services

SUBJECT:

Planning Process Review - Implementing Efficiencies

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

Does Council support the recommendation to implement the recent and proposed initiatives by the Development Services Department to make the processing of planning and development applications more efficient and do they agree with the recommended amendments to the Development Application Procedures and Fees Bylaw No. 2791, 2012 that will help speed up the processing of some development permit applications and development variance permit applications?

RECOMMENDATION:

That the COTW receive Staff Report DEV-16-003 for information, provide any additional direction to staff as the COTW considers advisable, and direct staff to prepare a report for Council's consideration.

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BACKGROUND:

In the Mayor's year end address on December 14, 2015, she identified a "review of planning processes" as a priority for Council. The purpose of the review is to look for efficiencies that may help speed up the review process for certain development permit and development variance permit applications.

It should be noted that staff worked hard in 2015 to improve work efficiencies in order to maintain focus on application timelines. Critical to this process was the implementation of an internal project management system which tracks timelines for each application. The timelines are then reviewed weekly at the regular team meeting. The use of this system has helped reduce "project slippage" by maintaining constant focus on timelines agreed upon with applicants. Recent feedback from

applicants has generally been positive. The Director of Development Services has recently been receiving fewer complaints and more positive feedback related to the time it is taking to process applications. The Development Services team has taken seriously earlier criticisms about processing times for applications and has worked hard to reduce those times. One recent example was the rezoning application for 865/867 Kindersley Street. The entire application was completed in just over two months.

Another recent initiative to help streamline the application review processes is the “Interim Zoning Bylaw Amendments” (Zoning Bylaw, 1992, No. 2050, Amendment Bylaw No. 2861). The proposed amendments will help to provide greater clarity and certainty when interpreting the Zoning Bylaw. In addition, the amendments to the definitions of “Front”, “Side”, and “Rear” Yards and “Front”, “Side”, and “Rear” Lot Lines, will likely reduce the number of “Rear Yard” variance applications required since each parcel will now only have one “Rear Yard” as opposed to the potential for several “Rear Yards” under the current definitions.

In addition, the Mayor, Chief Administrative Officer, Director of Engineering and Public Works, and the Director of Development Services, recently met with the Executive Director of the Capital Region Chapter of the Urban Development Institute (UDI) along with several members of the UDI board to discuss the development approval processes in Esquimalt. The UDI representatives indicated that the Township was doing the right things - we just need to promote ourselves better. The Township has committed to meeting with the UDI on a regular basis to discuss any outstanding issues related to the various application processes and to discuss ways to improve the processes.

Notwithstanding the commitment by staff to improved processing times, there are several limitations imposed by existing bylaws that currently impose constraints on processing times. These constraints could be mitigated through a series of bylaw amendments. The following is a list of potential amendments to the Development Application Procedures and Fees Bylaw No. 2791, 2012 that could potentially reduce the processing times for certain development permit and development variance permit applications that would recommend Council direct staff to implement.

Proposed Amendment	Comments
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<p>The Development Application Procedures and Fees Bylaw No. 2791, 2012 currently requires the Director of Development Services to refer almost all permit applications to the Advisory Planning Commission (APC). Staff is proposing that for certain types of applications, they proceed directly to Council for a decision. These would include the following: - Variances to maximum fence heights of less than 25%; - Variances to maximum building heights of less than 25%; - Variances to maximum setbacks of less than 25%; - Variances to minimum parking requirements of less than 30%; - Variances to site coverage less than 25%; - Variances to minimum lot width less than 25%; - Variance to minimum parcel area less than 25%; and - All variances to sign areas, heights, and numbers.</p>	<p>Referrals to the APC can add up to one month of additional processing time. By sending applications that have potentially minor impacts on neighbours directly to Council the processing time can be reduced by almost half. Neighbours will still receive a notice and will still have an opportunity to address Council. Had these provisions been in place in 2015, the August meeting of the APC would not have been required because the only agenda item was a fence height variance and the number of items on the December agenda would have been reduced from four to three.</p>
<p>Schedule "C" of the Bylaw (Schedule "A" of this report) provides a list of development permits that can be approved by the Director of Development Services. It is suggested that development permit applications for the following developments be added to the list: - All signs not requiring variances; - All accessory buildings not requiring variances; and - All "Single Family Residential Dwelling Units" not requiring variances.</p>	<p>The proposed additional types of development permit applications to be added to the list in Schedule "C" would help speed up the processing of some basic forms of development. Adding "Single Family Residential Dwelling Units" in particular will allow developers to start their projects much sooner following the rezoning process. Had these provisions been in place in 2015, the June meeting of the APC would not have been necessary.</p>

In addition to the above, the Development Services Department believes that additional efficiencies in planning and development application processes will result from the review of the Official Community Plan. In particular, the subdivisions will probably be exempted from requiring a development permit. On the other hand, additional development permit areas may be added related to the protection of the natural environment, reduction of greenhouse gasses, conservation of energy, and water conservation. During the Official Community Plan review process, the public will have an opportunity to discuss the pros and cons of incorporating additional development permit areas into the Official Community Plan. The ultimate decision of course will rest with Council.

ISSUES:

In her Year-End address, the Mayor identified the "review of planning processes" as a priority for Council. The central issue is to make the processing of various applications as efficient as possible. Staff has outlined several ongoing initiatives as well as several proposed amendments to the

Development Application Procedures and Fees Bylaw No. 2791, 2012 that they believe will help reduce the process burden and lead to the more efficient processing of planning and development applications.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. That the COTW receive Staff Report DEV-16-003 for information, provide any additional direction to staff as the COTW considers advisable, and direct staff to prepare a report for Council's consideration.
2. That the COTW provide alternative direction to staff.
3. That the COTW request further information from staff.