

PUBLIC MEETING
April 16, 2008
Approved Minutes

DATE: April 16, 2008
TIME: 7:00 p.m. - 7:20 p.m.
PLACE: Stratford Town Centre, 234 Shakespeare Drive

COUNCIL: Mayor Kevin Jenkins, Deputy Mayor Steve MacDonald, Councillor Sandy McMillan, Councillor Diane Griffin, Councillor Emile Gallant, Councillor Gary Clow, Councillor Patrick Ross

STAFF: Robert Hughes, C.A.O., Vahid Ghomoshchi, Director of Planning, Adele Gillis, Recording Clerk

PLANNING BOARD MEMBERS: Rob DeBlois, Norman Lalonde, Carlos Loursenso

CONSULTANT: Phil Wood, P. Wood & Associates

RESIDENTS: 13

CHAIR: Councillor Sandy McMillan

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Kevin Jenkins: Called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed all those in attendance. I would like to thank everyone in attendance for your interest in the issues of the Town. This is another in a continuing series of public meetings and consultations on the Core Area Plan, and over the past two years a number of public meetings and private consultation have been held with developers and architects. The Town has received a lot of feedback on the Plan. There were some areas for improvement in the original version of the Core Area Plan and we appreciate the feedback from the developing community, as well as the residential community. I believe that the Town has addressed a good number of the concerns that were raised, and tonight we will present what we think is our final version of the Plan, but we will take into account any feedback to Council that we receive this evening. There is a proposed first reading of the Zoning and Development Bylaw for Core Area at a public Council meeting on

Wednesday, April 23, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. pending the feedback we receive from the meeting this evening.

The purpose of the meeting this evening is to present the revised version of the Core Area Plan. We hope to receive feedback as to whether or not we have addressed some of the concerns that you have raised and get your feedback on this version of the Core Area Plan.

Mayor Jenkins then turned the meeting over to Sandy McMillan, Chair of the Planning & Heritage Committee, and Phil Wood, Consultant.

Councillor McMillan:

I would like to reiterate what the Mayor has just said. First reading, if all goes well, and we have worked through all the details that we have presented this evening, then on Monday, April 21, 2008 the Planning & Heritage Committee will review all comments and make a recommendation to Council. The first reading of the Zoning and Subdivision Development Control Bylaw and the approval of the Subsidiary Plan, which we will be discussing this evening, will be held on Wednesday, April 23, 2008. The second reading by Council will be held at the regular Council Meeting on Wednesday, May 14, 2008. Phil Wood will handle the majority of the meeting and there will be an opportunity for the public to ask questions during the meeting. Residents are asked to use the microphone when asking questions so your comments can be recorded. We welcome any input, as we have worked long and hard on these documents.

Councillor McMillan then turned the meeting over to Phil Wood.

Phil Wood:

Most of you are aware that this process is now into its third year. We are now into almost two full years of consultation since the original

draft documents were tabled. That's the good news. One of the reasons that I like working in Stratford is that Stratford has a well known reputation for its Public consultations and for consultations that are of substance, not just of form. The Official Plan had one of the most comprehensive public consultation processes in this province, and I think that the Plan has been very successful since it has been approved, and that is directly a result of that level of consultation.

I will make my comments as brief as possible, but I will show you some of the fairly dramatic changes that have been made to the original documents as a result of this consultation process.

The main reason that we are here this evening is to hear from you. This is a formal hearing, and as part of the approval process, we are here to hear your comments and concerns and to help you articulate them and to pass them on to Planning Board. They will be recorded as part of the record, this approval process. As Sandy mentioned earlier, please go to the microphone, and please identify yourself, as it is very important that your comments are recorded, so they are on the record. If your concerns are not addressed, the fact that you have recorded concerns and they haven't been addressed, that's going to be documented for the record.

I will talk about the Bylaw amendments first because there are very few changes. The Bylaw was tabled over a year ago and the only two changes relating to the Bylaw proposals are on Page 4, Section 27.5 sub 3. This is simply trying to clarify the parking requirements in the Waterfront Core Area (WCA). There was a feeling that the existing parking requirements in Stratford are very much suburban types of requirements, they tend to be high in terms of the order of magnitude to most other communities, certainly when compared to more urban

types of communities. We are talking about the Waterfront Core Area. The whole intention was to develop a downtown core and by definition the mix of land uses, on street parking, the type of development does not require the same sort of suburban level of parking. One of the key issues would be, there will be underground parking, there is going to be on street parking. As you know that there is a very active discussion about public transit and this would absolutely be the primary nodes for public transit. All of those factors have to be taken into account, in terms of determining parking, because the last thing you want is to see excessive parking. This is expensive land and the level of development standards for roadways are very high. We need to be efficient as possible, so if you look at that section, this is simply to enable Council to have some flexibility, in terms of interpreting parking requirements.

Page 4, Section 27.5 sub 3.

- (3) *Council may adjust the parking requirements as provided in Section 7 of the this Bylaw to reflect the availability of on-street parking in the immediate vicinity of a Development or to acknowledge other mitigating factors such as the availability of public transit, proximity to significant residential densities (with pedestrian access), efficiencies of scale and use or peak demand synergies.*

The other key amendment in the same area is under Waterfront Residential under

Sec.28, and that really just allows for taller building under a Special Permit.

Section 28.5 sub 3

- (3) *Notwithstanding the above, buildings having a height greater than 4*

stories may be approved by Council where the impact on view planes of the waterfront are minimized, adequate parking is provided, adequate fire protection facilities are provided and the impact on the streetscape is minimized via building design features such as tiered building heights with taller building elements setback from the lot line. Taller buildings will be encouraged to be located in the middle of blocks rather than at intersections.

These are the two key changes in the document and both came out of focus groups where we were talking to landowners, architects and developers within the community.

Most of the changes that you are going to see are in the Subsidiary Official Plan, even visually you will see a difference. *(Phil display the original document along with the revised document for comparison purposed)* The reason for the changes are that the sheer cost of producing many copies of this document would become an issue. The cost of amending the document would be a significant issue, those are really the minor concerns. The other concerns were, that there is an awful lot of surplus material in this document, a lot of background analysis, which really doesn't need to be in the legal document. This document will remain as resource to Vahid and the planning staff when they are making decisions and it will explain some rationale behind these policies. The Official Plan is much more a policy document. There was not the need to include a lot of the background analysis. The other issue is that there were a lot of concerns about the illustrations in the consultant's report. We tried to soften that by saying the illustrations were really artists renderings, or simply illustrations of the development concepts weren't meant to be zoning

maps or ridged implementations. We changed the wording but we still kept getting comment after comment from landowners, who had a picture drawn for the future development of their property. We had comments like, I don't want to do that or that building is not appropriate to my site, you have a pond in the middle of my property. We had very specific comments about what was in those pictures and reasonably so, I think. Is that going to come up at an IRAC hearing that I didn't build a building that looks like that? The easiest answer was to leave these as representative illustrations within the consulting document and to leave the Plan, with just the actual terminology, in terms of what are the actual standards and then those will be interpreted on a property by property basis, based on development applications. This document looks very much different, physically.

The other key change is if you look at the actual development criteria, the architectural design standards, and landscaping standards. We have a great deal of criticism from the community that there were the view of one person. Our primary consultant is a very talented landscape architect, there is no question that the vision was very well articulated, and very handsome, but I have a feeling, by the architects, in particular, that this would stifle creativity rather than encourage it. As a result we have dramatically cut back the design criteria to the point where they are much more general in nature, they provide an overall template, rather than being very descriptive and detailed. You will see a very significant reduction in the volume of the architectural design criteria and landscaping criteria. The document is a very pared back version but the overall direction an intent remains very much the same.

I would now like to open the floor for any questions or comments.

Councillor McMillan:

Does anyone have any comments that they would like to make? The documents have been online and I'm presuming that a number of you have read them from there. There are a few copies available and if we haven't met the need please leave your name and we will send out more documents.

Does anyone have any comments on the changes, please come forward?

Is there anything further that you would like to hear from either Phil or me regarding these changes?

Phil Wood:

Does anyone have any questions about the rational as there has been a rather significant change to the document?

Councillor McMillan:

I would like to address a couple of things that were addressed in the paper that perhaps we have over spent our money or were negligible in the amounts of money that went into this project. I can assure you that we have an enormous return from the consultants that we hired. We have this document that is presented tonight, two documents, in fact and an enormous amount of work went into the document, in the detail. Various departments that had to be contacted for the technical detail and we held a number of the meetings, one on one, with major landowners. A number of Public Meetings were also held. We now have a remarkable Open Space Master Plan along with this document and a new branding marketing signage package.

This initiative has been a major balancing act and when you go to the public and you ask them for their input as to what they want to see in future years, how they want the Town to be developed, what the Town is going to look like. It's a very difficult thing to ask people that question. It's very hard to articulate what you really want and for seventy three hundred people with diverse backgrounds it's even more difficult. This is a major balancing act and I think that the document has done justice to that.

Last call for questions.

If here no questions, the last think I will say is that, if something comes to your mind in the next while, please contact us through phone calls or written submissions to the planning department.

Phil Wood:

I would like to thank everyone from coming and I will stay after the meeting if you want to talk one on one or if you have any questions.

Meeting adjourned 7:20 p.m.

Councillor Sandy McMillan
Planning & Heritage Chair

Vahid Ghomoshchi
Town Planner