

Oak Bay Review Committee on Secondary Suites  
Committee's Activities and Current Policy  
April 1 and April 16, 2009

*Where are we so far?*

Mayor Causton struck a committee to review the policy on secondary suites in part because most other regional municipalities already have held their review or are currently reviewing their by-laws on secondary suites.

Councilor Nils Jensen is Chairing this review committee and joining him from Council are Pam Copley and John Herbert. There are three Oak Bay citizens: David Blades, Tony Sharp and Colin Crisp. Mayor Causton sits on the committee in an ex-officio capacity. Roy Thommasen, Director of Planning and Building, is present at all the meetings to answer technical questions about the Building Code and By-laws related to current and possible future policies. He is a non-voting committee member.

Lise-Lotte Loomer, is the secretary to the committee and also coordinates all communications including facilitating the community consultations. She is a non-resident of Oak Bay. She is a non-voting committee member.

On January 21, 2009, the committee met for the first time. Since then, all meetings have welcomed the members of the public who are invited to ask questions and share their views with the committee.

The Review Committee is interested in learning about what other municipalities' experience has been leading up to a change in secondary suite policy and their experience since the policy has been in place, should Oak Bay wish to pursue this further. Sarah Jones, a community planner from View Royal and Brian Sikstrom, a senior planner from Victoria, have both made presentations to the committee.

*What is the process ahead?*

The committee is very much in the beginning stages of review. The community consultations have been designed to provide maximum feedback on the idea of secondary suites. The information gathered at these two sessions will form part of the questionnaire which will be mailed to each homeowner with their tax notice sent in May. In June, the intention is to

present an interim report to Council outlining the committee's activities to date. In early Fall, the final report including survey results will be presented at a community meeting and at a Council meeting.

*Where can I view minutes of the committee and other resources on secondary suites?*

Committee activities and useful links are being posted at [www.oakbaybc.org](http://www.oakbaybc.org) under the heading of Secondary Suites Review Committee Information

*Can Council just vote and change will happen automatically?*

No. Any consideration of secondary suites would mean a change to the Official Community Plan (OCP). A change would require a public hearing in order for Council to consider a by-law change.

*What does Oak Bay currently permit?*

Oak Bay currently permits up to two boarders within a single family dwelling. Boarding use is defined as "the sharing of the principle building, as a single family dwelling unit, by the family of the owner or lessee, with not more than two other unrelated persons; but excludes transient accommodation, separate suites and independent accommodation".

*What would I need to change if secondary suites were allowed and I wanted one in my house?*

The BC Building Code regulates health and safety requirements for dwelling units which contain a secondary suite. Key areas include the following:

- fire separations between principle dwelling and secondary suite
- adequate hard wired smoke alarms, may require interconnection with main dwelling
- safe exiting from building
- bedroom emergency egress
- separate heating systems between suite and main dwelling