

Secondary Suite Committee

Wednesday, January 21, 2009 at 5:00 PM

Oak Bay Municipal Hall Council Chambers

Meeting called to order 5:05 pm

Attended by: Nils Jensen (Chair), David Blades, Colin Crisp, John Herbert, Tony Sharp,

Roy Thomassen, Mayor Christopher M. Causton (ex-officio member)

Lise-Lotte Loomer (secretary- non-voting)

Regrets: Pam Copley

Welcome and Introductions

The committee introduced themselves.

Committee Mandate

Mayor Causton made some opening remarks. He thanked the members for serving on this committee. He explained his reasoning for striking this committee. The community is somewhat divided on the issue of secondary suites, and there is a lack of accurate information on the issue at this time.

There are some givens:

1. Oak Bay is a dormitory community to Camosun College and the University of Victoria. There are 19,000 students currently attending UVic. Seventy percent of whom are from out-of-town. They are looking for accommodation in this region.
2. There is no rental housing being built. There is a need for accommodation.
3. The committee doesn't need to spend time on the merits of home owners relying on borders to help pay the mortgage.
4. Oak Bay allows up to 2 boarders in a dwelling unit.
5. Citizens like the single family nature of this community.
6. There are examples of conversions of: duplex to single home, garage conversions, and conversion of top of garage. There are no complaints of any of these.
7. Regarding using services, an average house could have 2 adults, 2 children and 2 borders. Or a husband/wife and a border or a large blended family.
8. If you want to go down the road of garage conversions, look to Seattle and Vancouver. The biggest challenge is the building code.
9. If you decide to legalize, we need to look at the possibility of grandfathering and look at View Royal's experience. How do you legalize something that is non-conforming?
10. There is a lot of material because most communities have looked at secondary suites.
11. Hoping to have a draft report to Council in May. The community wants input on this issue.

Nils – We need to look at options, what we've seen; what people have told us and there are a variety of ways to approach e.g., Climate Change Task Force – concentrated living units. How are we going to get public input? Education is a huge part of this. At public forums, we could distribute information.

Reports/ Interim reports; would like to have blogs – too expensive to develop. Do it old fashioned way. Have people come talk to us. Want all our meetings to be advertised. Give people 5 minutes to speak as at other meetings.

John: Feels strongly that we send a questionnaire, in a month sending a tax notice, could get sent.(see attachment #3, sample questionnaire from Colwood)

Discussion of ways for public input:this committee, council, formal process, structured, mandatory
(When it impacts Official Community Plan?)

Secondary Suites Overview and Oak Bay OCP/ Zoning / Building Code

Roy Thomassen presented. See attachment #1 and #2. Definition of “borders” as outlined in the local government act is 2 borders (unrelated to homeowner) allowed in any dwelling. It assumes no kitchen. The dwelling assumes only one cooking facility. There is no definition of cooking facility.

Brief discussion of enforcement issues and parking.

Official Community Plan will be required to change if we go forward with secondary suites.

Attachment #2

Key safety issues of secondary suites:

- fire separation
- smoke alarms
- safe exiting
- bedroom egress

These are important issues of public safety, for example smoke alarms.

David Blades spoke to the importance of smoke alarms for the safety of both the land owner and the tenant.

Work Plan and Committee Schedule

Committee members felt a need for Communication. It was agreed that Lise-Lotte would write a communication plan to present to the committee at the next meeting and assist the committee with their communication needs based on her previous experience and expertise in this area.

The next meeting will be held on February 4th at 5:30 pm (note time change) Oak Bay Municipal Hall Council Chambers. It will be a chance for members to have reviewed the information handed out in this meeting and ask questions of Roy Thomassen.

Subsequent meetings will be advertized beginning Wednesday, February, 18th at 5:30pm

Meeting adjourned at 6:20pm

New Action Items

Date	Item	Whose Responsible	By When
January, 21, 2009	Communication plan	Lise-Lotte	February, 4, 2009
January, 21, 2009	Read all materials handed out, prepare any questions for next meeting	All Committee members	February, 4, 2009