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District of Sechelt

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Re: Application No. 3360-2022-06; Lot 5 Tower Rd., District Lot 4305; Plan VAP 20036; PID 006-922-562: Silver Valley Homes; referral to West Sechelt Community Association (WSCA)

Greetings:

Thank you for the referral of the referenced application for development on Tower Rd. (the "Application"). WSCA has reviewed the Application and attachments in detail and has the following comments.

1. The availability of water and adequate water pressure is of paramount importance given the already stressed water supply. Water must be sufficient for both the proposed units and landscaping should replacement plantings be installed. Water service is already stressed in adjacent subdivisions; specifically, residents of both the Cascade and Tyler Heights subdivisions have complained of insufficient water pressure for flushing toilets in the summer. The staff report states that the developer will be encouraged to investigate rain harvesting and greywater use. This is encouraging. WSCA would like clarification about the extent of this investigation and whether water issues will be conditions precedent to any approval of this development. In addition, will the SCRDC grant an exemption from water restrictions should mature vegetation be replaced by new landscaping?
2. WSCA's traffic concerns focus on the intersection of Emerson and Tyler Roads (Development Permit 2021-05 for a 50 lot subdivision recently approved by Council). This intersection is already problematic for vehicular traffic and pedestrians because it is narrow and requires a 90 degree right angle turn. The road has a park and ALR properties on either side. There are no sidewalks after the walkway ends on Tyler until halfway down the block on Emerson. Children walk to school, other residents walk in the area, and must walk in the road and dodge cars and buses. The 50 lot subdivision in conjunction with the proposed rezoning to 36 units will exacerbate the safety issue. What are the plans to address this public safety problem?
3. The application does not include any discussion of the problem of standing water, running water, runoff or the potential of wetlands. The property in the adjacent land has a drainage problem after rains and snow melt. What will be done to address drainage in the area?

4. As noted in the arborist report attached to the Application, there are 178 mature trees, many of them important and significant. Although the arborist is not optimistic about retaining any of these trees on account of potential conflict with BC Hydro lines, WSCA would request consideration of the importance of mature vegetation which benefits not only esthetics but even more importantly the impact of heat due to climate change. Green spaces and shade are important to the community and for public health. West Sechelt has been blighted by clearcuts by developers who had promised to retain clusters of old growth in the past, e.g., Silverstone. Large areas have been denuded of foliage which is harmful to habitat, pollinators and humans. What efforts will the District of Sechelt undertake to preserve the environment? What alternative preservation measures are available?
5. The Application proposes to dedicate as parkland the area under the power lines. Has there been consideration of health consequences that may affect the suitability of this land for residences or recreation? Will there be sufficient parking dedicated for people to park and use the trail network? Currently, parking for users of the Crowston Trail is a problem.
6. Affordable housing trumps amenities. The situation has reached a desperate point for many mid-income families. Further, the lack of affordable housing has affected the recruitment of health care professionals and other vital services relocating to the Sunshine Coast. WSCA would request clarification of the amount and potential pricing structure for the affordable housing envisioned by the applicant.
7. WSCA questions whether the Application presents the best land use practices. Increased densification may be appropriate but the intensity presented by the Application does not comply with the zoning bylaw requirements of 700 square meters per lot to accommodate a dwelling plus an accessory dwelling or duplex in R4 zones and the spirit of creating a community set forth in the Official Community Plan. Or does the plan really present spot zoning on a 5000 acre tract? WSCA suggests that the plan be reconfigured to meet the minimum parcel size for R4 zones and that the R3 zones (min. 350 sq. m.) be reconfigured into 20 lots that would provide a transition from single family units to higher density dwellings. We believe that with a slight adjustment in the park dedication area, the proposed 36 lots can be created which would result in better integration with the adjacent development and is more consistent with OCP in terms of parcel area requirements and urban infill.

WSCA's approval of the Application will depend upon the answers to its questions and the responses to its requests for clarification. Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Application. Please contact the undersigned if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,
Candice Sayre, President, on behalf of the
West Sechelt Community Association

C: Council