

Daycare exits hot political waters with new, expanded childcare centre in Steveston ^[1]

Author: Wood, Graeme

Source: Richmond News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 19 Jul 2016

AVAILABILITY

Read online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

Developer Onni is one-tenth of the way to filling its Imperial Landing buildings with commercial tenants after Richmond city council unanimously approved rezoning to accommodate a soon-to-be-evicted childcare centre in Steveston.

But will the move deteriorate the ability to maintain the site for maritime commercial and industrial purposes, as it is presently zoned for? Not according to one of the developer's biggest critics, Coun. Harold Steves.

"This council is in for the long haul," said Steves, of the long-standing rezoning feud between Onni and the City of Richmond.

Monday evening, at a public hearing at Richmond City Hall, council weighed the pros and cons of accepting childcare as a permitted use on the second floor of 4080 Bayview Street.

The decision appeared to be a "no brainer," as described by Coun. Bill McNulty.

Steves said the rezoning, as requested by the City of Richmond, is a mere text amendment that rights the wrongs of a past council decision to not include childcare in the maritime zoning.

When council finalized the vote, a collective sigh of relief was heard among Generation Daycare parents.

"This was the mountain that we needed to get over," said Generation's owner Agnes Lewis, whose Trites Road business is being evicted come Sept. 30 but has already agreed to a lease with Onni.

Considering the lack of childcare facilities in Richmond, Steves said this was "not the issue to take Onni to task for."

Council had received dozens of letters from nearby residents opposing the rezoning, which allows for a childcare facility to operate only on the 5,600-square-foot second floor of one building.

In his submission, local resident William Armerding called Onni "crooks."

Kelvin Higo wrote that he was concerned about a precedent for further "spot" rezoning.

One parent, speaking to council, stated she supports the maritime zoning but more pressing is the need for childcare.

Speaking to council, Richmond resident Andrea Hunter stated the Richmond School District and Vancouver Coastal Health should have been fully consulted. She said it was dangerous to put a childcare centre near the river and the current zoning could allow for industrial practices, such as welding, to occur at later dates.

Numerous parents, who take their children to the existing daycare, said the new facility is a marked improvement over the old, windowless site next to a bottle depot.

Lewis said the walk from Homma elementary to Imperial Landing is safe. Several parents agreed.

Lewis added that the children will avoid crossing busy Trites Road and learn about Steveston's heritage en route.

Traffic and parking concerns were also raised. The city's director of development Wayne Craig stated there was underground parking and traffic wouldn't be a concern.

With council's approval, Lewis said the next step will be for Generation to obtain pertinent permits related to occupancy, building codes and health and safety.

Coun. Linda McPhail noted she would like to hear from the community on how more people can work in childcare to

Nearby resident Sharon Renneberg wrote to the city, stating Generation's desperate attempt to find space was indicative of a bigger

problem.

"First, let me say that this hearing wouldn't even be necessary if the City recognized and supported the need to maintain zoning for our dwindling Light Industrial land. The race to rezone all of Richmond for a residential windfall is creating this domino effect."

Onni has asked to rezone nearly the entire site for general commercial purposes. City council has asked for community amenities and/or cash in return for the lucrative new zoning. The two sides appear to be far apart. The site has sat empty for four years.

Full report here.

A brief chronology of Imperial Landing property:

1893: Imperial Cannery built.

1893-1996: Fishing, no zoning issues.

1996: BC Packers Ltd. closes its Imperial Plant, fish processing ceases in Steveston.

1997: BC Packers Ltd. pitches an 800-unit condominium complex, with private waterfront access.

1998: Richmond city council introduces "maritime mixed-use" (MMU) zoning for boardwalk portion of 40-acre site.

2001: BC Packers Ltd. offices close, Onni buys entire site, with the boardwalk area zoned MMU.

2003: Onni pitches Imperial Landing to Richmond city council. Housing subsequently built on north and east sides of the 40-acre site.

2007: Onni applies to rezone MMU zoned land (the boardwalk area).

2009: Onni proposes a building plan similar to the one that exists today.

2011: Onni pulls plug on bid to build apartment towers amidst community backlash.

2012: Construction begins on the six existing, two-storey buildings in the boardwalk area.

2013: Onni offers \$1.5 million for a "Leisure Fund" to rezone the site.

2014: Onni offers a cash/lease package worth about \$2.5 million after council expresses interest in a library.

2015: Onni makes no offer.

2016: Onni offers \$3 million for "Steveston Amenity Account."

-reprinted from Richmond News

Region: British Columbia ^[3]

Tags: accessibility ^[4]

demographics ^[5]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/16/07/daycare-exits-hot-political-waters-new-expanded-childcare-centre>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/16/07/daycare-exits-hot-political-waters-new-expanded-childcare-centre> ^[2]

<https://www.richmond-news.com/news/daycare-exits-hot-political-waters-with-new-expanded-childcare-centre-in-steveston-1.2305121> ^[3]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7860> ^[4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/accessibility> ^[5]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/demographics>