

Meeting Minutes

UBC DEVELOPMENT PERMIT BOARD (DP BOARD)

Date: Jan 31, 2024
Time: 5:00 pm – 7:00 PM
Place: Wesbrook Community Centre, Social Room

Attendees:

Board Members

Shannon Dunn	Chair
Jennifer Sheel	UBC Administration Representative
Ian Carter	UBC Resident Representative
Chad Berling	UBC Student Representative
Michael White	Ex-Officio - Associate Vice-President, Campus & Community Planning

Applicant Team

Sarah Christianson	Polygon Homes - Development Manager
Rene Rose	Polygon Homes - Senior Vice President, Development,
Nick Sharp	GBL Architects - Architect
Andrew Emmerson	GBL Architects - Architect
Sarah Siegel	HAPA Collaborative - Landscape Architect

Staff

Grant Miller	Director of Planning, Development Services
Karen Russell	Manager, Development Services
Jordan Chamberlin	Planning Assistant, Development Services (Recorder)

Members of the Campus Community

1.0 Call to Order and Approval of the Agenda

The Chair brings the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.
A motion is made by the Chair for the approval of the Agenda. This motion is seconded by Jennifer Sheel.

2.0 Welcome and Introduction of New Board Members

Michael White introduces himself and explains that he is a non-voting member of the Board. The Chair reminds the Board that their purpose is to ensure that the Development Permit application is meeting the policies and regulations of the university and that due process is followed.

3.0 Election of Vice-Chair

The Chair explains the need for a Vice-Chair and that Jennifer Sheel is willing to put her name forward. The Chair puts forward a motion to elect Jennifer Sheel as Vice-Chair. The motion passes 4-0.

4.0 Approval of Previous Minutes

The Chair moved to approve the Minutes dated xxx. The motion passes 4-0

5.0 Development Permit Applications

5.1. DP23026 – Wesbrook Place Lot 26

- Grant Miller acknowledges this has been a unique process. Explains that the site in question has a prescribed height and density and use within the Wesbrook Neighborhood Plan. It is a uniquely shaped site which made siting the tower challenging. The applicant came forward with an initial proposal. While their initial proposal met the technical criteria of the plan, through the public process it became clear that there was particular concern about the impact on The Prodigy development across Gray Avenue.
- Grant explains that the developer took a step back and considered the feedback that was received through the public consultation process. The developer reconsidered and revised the tower placement and design which was then presented to the public in a second round of consultation. Grant explains that the Board will see a summary of public input from the initial round and the second round, as well as graphics to assist the Board in understanding the new location of the tower.
- Grant explains that this is unusual and that the developer took on the challenge and spent some time making revisions. Grant states that there is a recommendation for support in front of the Board that Karen will walk the Board through.
- Karen Russell gives the following overview of the contents of the report:
 - Explains and describes where the project is located. Goes over the existing site context, site topography, landscaping, and surrounding developments.
 - Discusses the development process and explains that the initial project was oriented along Gray Avenue. Identifies the areas of concern that were mentioned during the first public consultation period (traffic and construction impacts, density, height, and the impacts on Prodigy). Following the concerns raised during the initial public consultation, the applicant took the time to reconsider the building siting.
 - Explains that the applicant developed an alternate proposal that is being considered by the Board at this meeting.
 - Provides an overview of the new proposal, highlighting the changes that have been made from the original proposal. Provides an overview of the vehicular access, proposed tree removals, and the sustainability aspects of the revised proposal. Identifies and explains the variances that are being requested for the development.
 - Explains that the revised proposal is supported by staff and the Advisory Urban Design Panel (AUDP) and the Development Review Committee (DRC) whose recommendations are provided in the report.
 - Discusses the public consultation process and the feedback that was received during the first and second public consultation period via email, online surveys, public open house feedback forms, and resident petitions. Common comments during the second public consultation period were about the height of the tower, shadowing, loss of sun access, loss of open space, construction and traffic congestion and safety, and the location of the entrance of the parkade of Ross Drive. Karen provides planning staff's responses to each of these concerns.

- Explains that project proposal was reviewed for compliance with three policy and regulatory documents: The Land Use Plan, The Wesbrook Place Neighborhood Plan, and the Development Handbook. There are two variances that are required, one to the Wesbrook Neighborhood Plan and one to the Development Handbook. These are:
 - 1) To allow for two corners on the south side of the building to encroach a maximum of 0.79 m (2.6 ft) into the 30 m minimum building separation from The Residences at Nobel Park located across the street on Ross Drive (Wesbrook Neighbourhood Plan).
 - 2) To allow a portion of the building on the south side to project 1.22 m above the permitted maximum height of 48.0 m (Development Handbook)

Karen Russell concludes by saying that staff recommends that the Board endorse the recommendations on the report including the approval of the variances.

This introduction is followed by a presentation of the proposed development by staff from Nick Sharp of GBL Architects, the project architect, and Sarah Siegel of HAPA Collaborative, the project landscape architect.

Questions and Comments from the Board:

The Chair invites comments from the Board members.

- Ian Carter provided the following comments:
 - Commends the team on the presentation and what they have been able to achieve with the tower.
 - Asks how pick-up and drop-off deliveries such as Amazon and Save on Foods, are handled. Brings up concern about people and large vehicles moving in and out of the parkade. Asks for clarification on how visitors access the building.
 - Comments that there is no defined base to the tower and wonders if this could be looked into.
 - Expresses concerns about Lot 6 construction and when it is going to finish. States there should be a construction schedule available for the public. Would like to understand how the construction of the buildings at Lot 6 and Lot 26 can be undertaken at the same time without impacts on the community.
 - Expresses concerns about construction impacts on the eagle's nest and the long-term coning of the eagle's nest.

Applicant – Nick Sharp explains that there is no specified loading space required on site but they are working with Engineering to ensure the lay-bys off-site are adequately provisioned for drop offs. Visitors will be able to access the building using the standard entry phone, which is typically connected to a phone system in the main lobby and at the parkade entrance. Guests driving vehicles will use the system at the parkade entrance which will give them access to a gated visitor parking area. Guests arriving by foot will use the main lobby entrance. There may be a concierge in the building. Residents may either buzz in their guests or meet them in the lobby.

Regarding the lack of base on the tower, the transition in scale is picked up with the three-story volume and over height second story that is carried to the lobby area which acts as a base. Also, the townhomes will act as a base and will ground the tower as well.

By rotating the building there will be less impact to the eagle's nest.

- Grant Miller speaks to the construction management. Campus and Community Planning is already considering and planning how to manage construction vehicles accessing and leaving Lot 6 and Lot 26. Explains curbside parking is managed by the UNA who is interested in exploring curbside strategies.

Sarah Christianson, Polygon Homes states that Lot 6 does not yet have a completion date.

- Michael White recommends clear communication to the community about the construction schedules and coordination between Lot 6 and Lot 26. The Board could ask staff to work with the applicant to communicate through the UNA or the Campus and Community Planning website to provide better communication and clarity regarding timing and construction impacts.
- Jen Sheel provided the following comments:
 - Asks about whether there is an integrated rain water management plan and to better understand how rain water is going to be managed on-site.
 - Asks if any of the bike parking is contemplated for bike share programs or is connected to the electrical systems so there is flexibility for e-bikes.
 - Applauds the redesign that they took on.
 - Expresses concern that the courtyard is not open enough to the public and feels closed to the neighbourhood. Asks if adjustments can be made to open it up more while still maintaining an understanding that it is for private use.
 - Asks them to think about shade in the large open green space area.
 - Asks about loading and how waste containers are pulled to the street i.e., where waste and recycling sit within the public realm, and the practicality of residents bringing their garbage to a garbage room.
 - Recommends future-proofing the bike share area by providing for electric bikes

Sarah Christianson states that they will work with their Civil consultant and UBC's Infrastructure team to develop the rain water management plan with the goal of directing water to existing ponds and greenways.

Sarah Siegel explains that there is very little hardscape so they will try to push water to planted areas. She also informs the Board that there is a bike share area allocated on-site but it is not for e-bikes.

Sarah Christianson clarifies that there is a REAP requirement for the bike share area and it recommends an electrified area which they have provided. There is also a REAP requirement for one outlet for every two below-grade bike parking spots which they have provided.

Nick Sharp says that it isn't typical to have garbage facilities at grade. They worked to ensure garbage facilities are as functional and as easily accessible as possible. The project has been designed so that the travel distance is equitable with many possible routes from the tower and the townhomes. The garbage bins should be coordinated and brought up to grade from the garage with minimal interruption on the scheduled days.

Sarah Siegel says they are working on the right balance between private and public for the open space areas. We want the residents to feel like it's their backyard but the team is still working through the details of views and access. As planting matures, it should be shaded enough, but we can look for opportunities for more soil volume to incorporate additional trees.

- Michael White provides the following comments:
 - Appreciates that the project has been adjusted to address many of the concerns that were brought up during the initial consultation.
 - How did the shadowing impacts change and what are the remaining impacts?
 - Believes better communication from the applicant to the community about the construction timing and schedule of both of the sites would be helpful.
 - Understands the developer is trying to find the balance between enclosure and privacy in the open space. Recommends increasing the transparency and visibility through the site and diminish the enclosure approach for the private space as much as possible.
 - Appreciates that bird-friendly design has been incorporated into the design. The revised positioning of the building in relation to the eagle's nest is a positive change.
 - Believes that there have been refinements made to address the comments and concerns made during public consultation process.
 - Regarding access, pick-up, delivery servicing, those traffic aspects are helpful to understand and believes they have touched on the key points.

Re shadowing: Nick Sharpe explains that in the initial proposal with the building aligned along Gray Avenue, there was a disproportionate impact on Prodigy in particular with some shadowing on Cypress and Pine in the afternoon. In the revised proposal, because the building is moved more centrally and the length of the building adjacent to other buildings is shorter, the overall net impact is reduced. The revised proposal reduces the shadowing on Prodigy. There is a marginal increase across Webber Lane on Cypress and Pine Houses. The revised proposal distributes the massing across the entire site.

- Grant Miller explains this project fronts onto Gray Avenue which is a neighborhood street and Ross Drive which is a neighborhood collector. By providing a residential entry on Gray Avenue and vehicular entry on Ross Drive, there is a balancing of impacts. Staff is supportive of this.

There has been concerns raised regarding the traffic volume on Ross Drive. The annual traffic measurement shows that there is room for additional traffic on this road and that it is not near capacity. Interested in continuing to work with the UNA to develop curbside strategies to help minimize temporary obstructions to the travel lanes.

The Chair thanks the applicants for their responses and provides opportunity to open the meeting to public comment.

Public Comments:

Below is a summary of the verbal comments from 14 individuals:

- Concerns with increased traffic due to new development
- Safety of residents walking, scootering, biking to school, and new drivers
- Impacts on quality of life for residents
- Concerns with the construction of two sites (Lot 6 and Lot 26) happening at the same time.
- More residents creating more impacts on the community centre
- Delay the construction of Lot 26 to create a more welcoming environment to newcomers.
- Concerns with the height of the building.
- Garbage collection on Ross Drive, and the three movements that are required for garbage collection that will create road blockages and congestion
- Recommend a proper traffic study
- Relocate parkade entrance to Gray Avenue
- Concerns about the eagle's nest and its coning. Could the development be delayed or happen outside of the nesting period.
- Need to understand how long the eagles nest cone needs to be on as a result of the Lot 6 project. There has not been any communication about this.
- Concerns about emergency access on Ross Drive
- Clarify the difference between the original and current plan in terms of shadow impacts and the distances between buildings.
- Concerns about the impact to the streetscape with two towers facing each other on the street. This is a significant departure in the character of the Wesbrook neighborhood. Recommends the developer provide a real picture of what the streetscape environment will look like.
- Concerns that the tower will change it into a different kind of housing area that is not spaced out with open space. Concerns it will change to a high-density area.
- Don't understand how a 16-storey tower is allowable on the lot. Questioned who determined 16-storey was acceptable.
- The building is unattractive
- Too much density for the area
- Lack of communication that a high rise would be built on Lot 26
- Concerns regarding the public transportation and the addition of more building because the buses are already too full.
- Concerns about changes to the neighborhood and who to speak to regarding these changes.

Below is the Board, Developer, and Staff's response to the public comments:

Michael White recommends that information about the coning of the eagles' nest be communicated with respect to the development of Lot 6 and Lot 26.

At Michael White's request, Nick Sharp provided clarification again on the shadow analysis and the difference between the two schemes. Nick Sharp provides the distances between the proposed building layout and impacted buildings. For the Prodigy building the distance between the buildings is less, for Cypress and Pine the distance has slightly increased.

Michael White clarifies that the buildings that have received increased shadowing are the townhouses on Lot 26 and the areas that have decreased in shadowing are the existing adjacent properties across Gray Avenue and Webber Lane. Grant Miller states that the Residences on Nobel Park is south of the project so the impacts of shadowing are negligible in any scenario. Nick Sharp concurs that these statements are accurate.

At Michael White's request, Grant Miller provides an overview of the neighbourhood planning process that designated the height and density on Lot 26. Grant explains that the Wesbrook Neighborhood Plan amendments adopted in 2016 allow for a 16-storey building. At that time, there was a community-wide process to consider diversity in building types. Prior to 2016, a nine-storey building was allowed. The amount of square footage and density on the site did not change in the 2016 amendment. There has always been a plan for development on Lot 26. Plans and documents that provide diagrams of the massing have been publicly available since they were adopted.

Michael White explains that the public transportation service is outside the purview of this Board but expresses it is something that Campus and Community Planning is actively working on with TransLink.

Michael White clarifies that no development can be contrary to the neighborhood plans that are in place at UBC. Offers Grant's team to sit down and go over the process with those interested.

Shannon Dunn explains that the Land Use Plan and Wesbrook Neighborhood Plan which were developed by UBC and approved by the Province, allow for a 16-storey building on Lot 26. Michael White further clarifies that neighborhood plans are developed for each residential area before any development can take place. Those developments have to comply with the neighborhood plans. The neighborhood plans have to comply with our overall Land Use Plan which is like an Official Community Plan in municipalities. There will be an update to the Wesbrook Neighborhood Plan in the future.

The Chair closes the public comments.

Comments and Questions from the Board (continued):

The Chair summarizes the main points the Board should highlight:

1. Traffic management issues
2. Coning of the eagle's nest
3. Opportunity to improve communication on both timelines of construction and on process

The Chair explains that the mandate of this Board is to see that the development meets the Land Use Plan and Westbrook Place Neighborhood Plan for this site. The Chair reads the recommendation in the staff report and opens it up for discussion by the Board.

Jen Sheel recommends the following be added to the Development Permit:

- Communicate to the public the construction management timelines and process and the eagles' nest coning removal.
- Increase the transparency and visible access through the site and diminish the enclosure aspect of the private open space as much as possible.

The Chair requests a motion to approve the recommendation. The motion is passed unanimously by all members of the Board.

5. **Adjournment**

The meeting is adjourned by the Chair at 6:53 pm.