

CALUC Meeting Report

Meeting Date: December 17, 2020
Project Proposal Address: 902 Foul Bay
Applicant: Aryze
Attendance: Community 57 (approx.), FGALUC 5



Project Summary

Located at the junction of Quamichan, Redfern and Foul Bay, the subject site is within the Victoria neighbourhood of Gonzales.

The site was previously occupied by a 1911 heritage house. The previous building was destroyed in a fire in 2016 and the site has not been redeveloped. The developer is proposing to construct 18 townhomes. These homes are proposed as two blocks of townhomes nested along Foul Bay Road and Redfern.

The rezoning request is to amend these properties from the current R1-G zoning to a new site-specific CD- (TBD) zoning. The December 17, 2020 CALUC meeting is the second public meeting on the project. The second meeting was conducted at the request of the City of Victoria following proposed amendments to the projects.

It was stated at the beginning of the meeting that the discussion was to focus on the project rezoning, and not about other issues outside the CALUC’s mandate like the covenant on the property. This did not stop community members from voicing their views.

Identified Project Support/Oppose Statistics

Participants’ Stated Position	Number	Percentage
Oppose	16	67%
Support	7	29%
Not declared	1	4%
Total	24	100%

Major Themes

Issues – Opposition	Description
Too dense	Project is too dense for the neighbourhood
Too high	Project is physically too high for the neighbourhood
Impact on Trees and Ecosystem	Too many trees being eliminated and existing ecosystem being irreparably harmed
Too much traffic and reduced safety	Project will increase traffic, affect available on street parking and reduce safety for pedestrians, cyclist and children

Negative Change in Heritage Designation	Project will irreparably change the intended character of the site.
Concerns about Process	Concern that there has not been sufficient transparency with the process
Not affordable	The project is being characterized as affordable, but is not affordable.

Issues – Support	Description
Adds to housing diversity	The project adds to housing diversity in the neighbourhood
Good access to bike lane	Residents will have good access to cycling infrastructure
Good access to bus route	Residents will have good access to public transport.

Community Discussion

The following is a summary of the questions and statements from participants during the meeting. FGALUC does not verify the accuracy or fact-check statements.

Resident on Brighton – Opposes project. Expressed concerns about too much density, environmental impacts of cutting mature protected trees and reduced safety as a result of increased traffic along Brighton and Redfern.

Resident on Leonard but will be returning to Quamichan – Opposes project. Need to protect the original intent of the property. Approval will set a precedence regarding protection of heritage designation. Trees were an important part of the original heritage designation that was granted. The new project will result in the destruction of up to half of the trees on the property. These trees need to be protected. This will send a message that heritage designation doesn't matter.

Resident on Kipling Street – Opposes project. Cutting trees will negatively impact climate change. Concerns about the process. There is a covenant on the property that makes this project unethical. There are other lots with similar covenants, and this will set a precedence to impact other lots.

Resident in Gonzales neighbourhood – Undeclared. Asked if the proposal is consistent with the Gonzales community plan? Are there any policies in the plan that related to this proposal? Is the FGALUC making a recommendation or taking a position? Alec Johnson (City of Victoria) responded that the Gonzales Neighbourhood Plan is a relevant document to the staff analysis of the proposal as well as other relevant documents. Alec indicated that there aren't any policies in the GNP that are specific to this property; however, other City of Victoria policies respecting neighbourhoods and protecting trees are relevant to this proposal. FGALUC Chair Joanna Fox responded that the FGALUC is responsible for facilitating community engagement and does not form opinions or make recommendations.

Resident on Quamichan – Opposes project. Have lived in this location for 35 years. Opposes project because the new development will overshadow neighbourhood, change atmos-

phere and project is too high. Traffic is already very heavy from Glenlyon Norfolk School parents dropping off and picking up students as well as people travelling into Victoria for work. With the changes being made to Richardson, there will be additional pressure on Quamichan heading downtown. In addition, the bike lane on Richardson, Redfern will have additional bike traffic. Redfern is too narrow and doesn't have sidewalks from Quamichan to Brighton. All this traffic will make it much more dangerous for children, cyclist, pedestrians and anyone else in the area. Concern about the process.

Resident in Gonzales – Opposes project. Not a truly affordable project, too big, too high, removes too many trees, traffic and safety issue and out of character for neighbourhood. Concerns about process and consultation. In original CALUC meeting, there was different information about tree removal, height and traffic. Aryze has gone after opponents on social media and has tried to mislead and intimidate neighbours regarding removal of the covenant and attempted to discredit the neighbour's legal fundraising efforts on social media.

Resident on McNeil and Foul Bay – Supports project. The project is going to create affordable housing. The site is on bus route, bike route and MODO Car space. This is type of housing needed in this neighbourhood. This project will be better for the climate as a result of the positive aspects of the project. Could there be additional MODO vehicles in the area, particularly a Van? Aryze responded that they have approached MODO, but there was not enough demand in the area.

Resident on Richardson and Runnymede – Opposes project. Opposed to project because it is too big, out of character for the neighbourhood and too rapid an increase in density. Concern about the number of trees being removed and additional traffic and safety concerns. Project is out of character.

Resident in Gonzales – Opposes project. The size, height and scale are not appropriate. Loss of many mature trees. Too destructive. 22 protected trees would be lost. Not an "affordable" project. Takes away a lot and brings little to the neighbourhood.

Resident on Redfern – Opposes project. Has lived in neighbourhood 25 years. Takes issue with the characterization by some people that the community is NIMBY. Neighbourhood is diverse. Neighbourhood is not used to this tone. The size is too large at 18 units. Too much traffic will be brought by the size of the development. Red Barn Grocery (Oak Bay Avenue) has significantly increased traffic. Too many trees are going to be removed. Three units would be more consistent with the neighbourhood. We value our heritage in the community – 18 units are too many.

Resident in Gonzales – Support project. Grew up in the neighbourhood and many people are leaving to Langford because there are no affordable housing options in the area. Density is much needed in this area. It's sad to see so many leaving the neighbourhood because (other) people don't want these developments. Climate change needs to take into account the additional driving from the West Shore and the trees being removed out there for additional development. Young families cannot afford the neighbourhood. Vastly in favour. Cutting down one Beach tree for bike parking will do more for the environment than the impact of removing

one tree. Need to think about the younger people in the neighbourhood and the next generation.

Resident at Redfern and Brighton – Opposes project. Volunteer for Victoria Parks. Less than 4% of Garry Oak ecosystem remains in the region and need to preserve remnants including on private property. The scale of the project results in the loss of 24 trees. One of the Garry Oaks will have a building impacting its critical root zones. Developers plan indicates no replacement for six removed Garry Oaks. Only a tiny play area on the lot. The two Copper Beaches, six Garry Oaks and an Arbutus are slated for removal. Trees are essential to the neighbourhood and ecosystem. Aryze response – Replacing 4 Garry Oaks and adding 4 Pin Oaks on the site. Creating a Garry Oak understory on the site using plants from the Garry Oak meadow list. Removing invasive species on the site.

Resident on Redfern – Opposes project. Bought house because of the trees in the neighbourhood. In favour of increased density and more affordable homes. Would welcome a multifamily development on this property, but this development is too big and will kill too many trees. Ecologist by training and concerned about the loss of habitat from the loss of the canopy structure while the smaller trees grow out. Concern about the traffic. There is no sidewalk on the street and kids play on the street. There are many young families in the neighbourhood. This project is not going to reduce the amount of development happening in Langford. Would like developer to bring forward a more appropriate proposal that increases the density in an appropriate way.

Resident on Redfern - Supports project. Not enough density in the area and its now becoming “exclusive”. Not good for neighbourhood if only million-dollar homes. There is sufficient playground space nearby on Richardson and also Redfern Park (where he takes his grandchildren). A lot of younger families would appreciate the development. Able to walk to most amenities. The project takes advantage of the government program that helps people get into affordable housing.

Resident Outside Neighbourhood – Opposes project. Concern about the fact that it was a heritage property. Too much mass, too big. Neighbourhood would be quite willing to have a smaller and more reasonable townhouse development with the trees remaining. Challenges Aryze to “do better”.

Resident in Gonzales – Opposes project. Project is too big, too tall and out of character. Loss of trees will be terrible – they can’t be replaced. Will encourage additional parking on the street.

Resident in Gonzales – Supports project. Density is important in the neighbourhood. Can’t make houses affordable unless there are more on the property. Most houses being built in the neighbourhood are in the \$2 million range, which is not affordable. Reducing the number of townhouses will hurt affordability. Doesn’t like the idea of losing trees, but this plan appears to keep as many as possible. Would prefer to see no minimum parking – it takes space away from people and trees. We should reconsider if public parking on streets is a good use of public land. Doesn’t want to live in a “boomer-ghetto)

Resident in Gonzales – Opposes project. Loss of trees and the risk to the remaining trees is a great concern. This project has been described affordable, but the amount of income required to purchase a unit is double what the City of Victoria’s definition of affordable housing. Not opposed to townhouses, but 18 is too many and the project is too high. The alternative is a smaller development centred on the site that protects a majority of the trees. Aryze responded to clarify the income requirements required by the BC Housing program will make the project more affordable than is characterized in the program documents.

Resident in Gonzales – Supports project. Need to open Gonzales to more affordable housing. More affordable than any other housing options in Gonzales.

Resident in Gonzales – Supports project. Excited that this project could be attainable to their family.

Resident in Gonzales (second question) – is there public funds involved in the project, where do they come from and how do the conditions affect Aryze in terms of the sale price? Response from Aryze – yes, there are public funds because they come from BC Housing. BC Housing provides management and covenant of mortgages and they provide construction financing. Its return on investment is lower than a what a bank would typically finance. If Aryze was dealing with a bank they would not be able to get financing. BC Housing encourages the developer to earn a lower return but provides access to lower cost financing. The program is called the Affordable Housing Program. The appraised value of the units is \$900K, but Aryze is restricted to selling them for \$700K, which is \$200K below market. BC Housing secures the \$200K as a secondary lender. That second mortgage is considered as a part of the down payment by the federal government, which opens up access to better terms for the buyers. When the owner sells, the owner has to share the increase in value with BC Housing, which BC Housing passes onto City of Victoria to fund additional projects. BC Housing will not approve the project until the rezoning is complete but has provided a letter of intent.

Resident in Gonzales (second question) – Aryze has stated the project is “affordable housing.” What is the maximum selling price and the down payment requirement? Aryze response – \$700K. There is currently no down payment requirement, the BC Housing subsidy represents the down payment. BC Housing has indicated they may introduce a 5% down payment requirement.

Resident in Gonzales – Opposes project. All in favour of denser or greener living, but this level of density should be closer to the Village (Oak Bay) where it would fit in better with the character – 18 units is too much for this neighbourhood. Aryze has been too aggressive with neighbours who are challenging the removal of the covenant and threatening with costs if they lose.

Resident in Fairfield (second question) – Concerns that tree removal will impact remaining trees.

Resident in Gonzales and Architect for the project – Supports project. Has tried to design a project that would try to find a way for it to be integrated in with the neighbourhood as well as possible.

Resident in Gonzales – Opposes project. Chat message: "...ask the developer to go back to the drawing board and propose a multi plex of sorts that would maintain the important trees on the site and would leave room for parking and a place for children to play".

Resident in Gonzales – Supports project. Chat message: "...The affordable nature of this proposed housing project does provide more housing options currently not available in our neighbourhood. We need options for younger, first time homeowners. I encourage support for projects like this that supports a wider range of incomes to live in our community. The design is both thoughtful and in keeping with the built form."