

## **District of Sooke**

### **Special Council Meeting – August 10, 2020**

Mayor Tait

Councillors: Jeff Bateman, Al Beddows, Ebony Logins, Dana Lajeunesse, Tony St-Pierre, Megan McMath (absent)

Most of this meeting was devoted to a Development Permit with Variance for 2365 Church Road, which is a proposed private daycare centre in a residential area.

This is the fourth time that a proposal has come before Council from the owners of this property/business.

Maja Tait declared a conflict because her father lives near the development, so Ebony Logins acted as Chair.

Much of this part of the meeting was very detailed and after a while some of the councillors were very repetitive.

Staff report was given by Norm McInnes and it can be found here:

<https://sooke.civicweb.net/filepro/document/44356/Special%20Council%20-%2010%20Aug%202020%20Agenda.pdf?widget=true>

The key salient points that I drew from the meeting, which are not necessarily about the zoning variance per se, but more about broader issues include:

- “Our population will double by 2038” and we will need these amenities (the growth narrative runs deep)
- OCP must identify “commercial nodes” where these sorts of activities (daycare) can be located (excellent concept)
- “20-minute neighborhoods” - an expression of the desire to have everything you need within 20 minutes of your home (probably driving mind you!)
- “We need to ensure every possibility of success for the applicant.” Staff were hellbent on trying to find something the applicant could propose that would meet Council’s approval. Classic pro-development approach of staff. There is a sense that that’s what they are there for. It’s all about development. (“This doesn’t look like Sooke, Toto.”)
- There is a feeling that eventually this proposal will be approved, that Council will be so “worn down” they will say “yes” and their rational will be, “well the applicant started out with 38 daycare spots and x parking spaces, and y cars coming to pick-up and drop-off kids, and now it’s much smaller . . .”
- There was a remark about a second vehicle bridge crossing over the Sooke River as though everyone knows that is coming. Like four lanes on the Sooke Road . . .

- This is an absolutely ridiculous location for a daycare (drove by today) particularly because of parking and traffic issues along a road that is busy and has blind spots, but also because it is in the middle of a residential area.

Balance of the meeting was reports by individual councillors. Most interesting:

- Tony and Jeff attended the virtual Climate Caucus meeting for two days with municipal councillors and mayors from across Canada
- Sooke staff are getting trained in natural assets management
- Union of BC Municipalities coming up later in September. This is a very significant event. It will be virtual this year.

Notes: Alan Dolan