

OFFICIAL PUBLIC MEETING
hosted by the Planning Board
for the Rural Municipality of Victoria
**to hear public representations on the draft Official Plan and Development (Zoning &
Subdivision) Bylaw**

23 January 2024, 6pm
Victoria Schoolhouse, 730 Victoria Rd

MINUTES

Attendance of Planning Board members: Chair Councillor Eric Gilbert, Vice-Chair Councillor Shelley Trainor, Mayor Martin Ruben, and resident members Janet Lazon (by Zoom) and Susan Oxley (by Zoom).

Staff: CAO Anna Keenan, FAA Marsha Empson

12 members of the public attended the meeting - 8 in person and 4 via Zoom.

1. Call to Order

Councillor Gilbert called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

2. Presentation by the Chair to review the purpose of the meeting, the process of developing the Official Plan and Development Bylaw to date, and the required process for adoption.

Project background details can be found on the municipal website:

<https://www.rm victoria.com/vision2035>

Feedback from this meeting will be reviewed and discussed by the Planning Board at a January 30 public meeting. The draft plan and bylaw may, if the Planning Board deems that it is ready to be recommended to Council, then be presented to Council at the February 12 regular Council meeting.

3. Presentation by the Chair: a summary of written submissions by the public received in advance of the meeting.

Two submissions were received in advance of the meeting, covering 3 issues:

Regarding lot sizes in the Commercial Zone: there was concern that 5000 square feet was the lot size recommended by the municipal Development Officer (same as Central Core), but 8000 square feet was listed in the draft (same as General Residential).

- CAO Keenan confirmed this was a typographical error that will be corrected to read 5000 square feet. (Action)

Under Section 7 - Investing in the Future, it was suggested to add a Noise and Nuisance Bylaw.

Short Term Rentals (STRs): There was concern over potential negative effects of a short term rental policy. It was suggested to instead create a bylaw based on Charlottetown's newly-implemented policy, and to require an annual accommodation licence fee/tourism levy.

- CAO Keenan confirmed that the policy outlined in the draft documents was indeed based on Charlottetown's model, including a criteria to allow STRs only in an operator's primary residence.
- Further, CAO Keenan named that a tourism levy is a possibility for the town, however this would be separate to a Development Bylaw - it would require a Tourism Levy bylaw to be in place.

Finally, the following procedural items were discussed:

- As per standard meeting procedure, public comments received by Thursday, January 25, 2024 - 5 days prior to the next scheduled meeting - can be presented and considered by the Planning Board at their January 30 meeting.
- Public comments will be reviewed by the committee. Additional professional advice may be sought.
- The process for adopting and official plan was reviewed, as well as how a plan may be amended in the future (see the draft Development Bylaw, section 12).

4. Open floor for public comments on the draft Official Plan and Development Bylaw

The following general edits to the draft Official Plan were suggested, with an eye to improving accuracy of the document without altering the intent or impact:

- Page 2, Section 1.4, Paragraph 2, line 4 - after 'Bardin Palmer's son', add the name "**Donald**".
- Page 2, Section 1.4, paragraph 7 - after 'the quiet seaside community it is today', add "**until recently.**"
- Page 2, Section 1.4, paragraph 8 - add **The Orient Hotel** to the notable structures list.
- Page 7, Section 1.7.2 - correct "**several tourist shops**" to "a tourist shop"
- Correct references to "Victoria Harbour Authority" to read "**Harbour Authority of Victoria**".
- Development Bylaw 12.2.5 - **remove the blank item (I)**, it is a typo.

Regarding the Agricultural Zone, the following concerns were expressed:

- Concerns about the currently-**agricultural land east of Nelson Street being allowed to be rezoned as General Residential R1** in future (see the Future Land Use Map)
- Official Plan policy 5-29: concern that **the Agricultural Zone also has the intention of allowing residential uses**, doesn't seem consistent with the intent (stated earlier in the section) to protect agricultural land in Victoria. **Need to resolve this inconsistency.**
- **The need to strike a balance between protecting Agricultural land while allowing for growth and diverse housing.**
 - Concern that **Various housing types** are allowed in agricultural zones. (Development Bylaw - page 38, Sec 6.6)
 - Regarding 6.6.2(e), mobile homes being allowed in the agricultural zone **a desire to avoid the agricultural zone becoming a 'trailer park'**.
 - **We need to allow for housing to be built on farms**, at least as farmhouses for small-scale farmers.
- Concern about **avoiding sprawl**, to keep land agricultural.

- The character of Victoria is defined by **the feeling of driving in from the country, to a little village.**
- **The impact to wildlife**, particularly endangered swallows, if agricultural land area is reduced due to housing development.
- **Potential encroachment into wetlands and floodplains** if land use is changed to residential.

The following appreciations were expressed:

- Official Plan 5.7, second paragraph "*Council recognizes the continued farming of these lands until such time as the property owners wish to develop their land for other uses.*" - this language **supporting flexibility of future land uses** was placed there due to earlier input into this process by the current agricultural landowners.
- It's important to recognize that **mobile homes are an affordable housing option** for many who are less well-off.
- The current Vision Statement includes the idea that **we want to welcome people to come to Victoria, and to do that, there has to be places for people to live.** The potential future General Residential Zone allows us to create more space for people to live. It is a potential future zoning: it won't change to Residential overnight, but the plan allows that future possibility.
- Allowing multiple housing types in many zones can enable **housing for existing residents who wish to downsize** from single-family homes, being able to stay in their lifetime community.

And the following suggestions were made:

- **Rework the Permitted Uses** for Agricultural zones to strike the right balance on housing, to preserve agricultural uses.
- **Adjust minimum allowed lot sizes** for subdivided Agricultural land. The minimum lot area and minimum frontage should be made more clear - perhaps a minimum lot size of 2 acres (as in Ancaster, Ontario).

Regarding Preservation of Heritage character (Official Plan Section 4.8), the following appreciations were expressed:

- **That 'history' and 'heritage' are included** in this version of the plan, moreso than the plan currently in effect, even if many of the terms are 'may' and 'encourage' rather than 'shall' and 'will' and 'require'.
- Regarding Section 4.8.2 of the Official Plan - general support that the **option for Victoria to develop a Heritage Plan and Bylaw** is included, even though it is unlikely that we would want the Province to delegate authority to Victoria for implementation and for designating and registering heritage properties.
- **Including solar** in the plan, and noting that there are ways to incorporate solar in ways that respect heritage value.

The following concerns were expressed:

- Page 31, Section 4.3.1 of the Plan - concern about whether Victoria's **Victoria's cultural and heritage values** been identified.
- Concern about the **inability to retain historic consistency** while inviting new development.

The following questions were asked:

- Page 11 under Vision, 3.2 - **what would be considered a Heritage Site** that might be threatened by the effects of **climate change**?
- Section 4.8.1 Objectives, Social: regarding 'support and encourage the

preservation of Victoria's **cultural and heritage resources'**... **do we know what these resources are?**

- Section 4.2, Mission Statement: **'unique heritage value'** - **do we know what Victoria's unique heritage value is?**

And the following suggestions were made:

- **Design Guidelines** Official Plan Page 34, Policy 4-73, Development Bylaw Page 78, Section 14.5, and Development Bylaw Appendix D - there could be more detail added to the design requirements, to **make them more comprehensive, tighter, and a requirement**, especially for the Central Core zone. Add more examples of existing designs.
- Page 21 - Section 4.4.1, under the Physical heading - revise the language 'aesthetics and land use compatibility' to instead read "...stress aesthetics, appropriate land use **and heritage architectural compatibility.**"
- Include a **requirement for mature trees to be planted on new lots.**

Regarding Tourism, the following concerns were expressed:

- **Short-term Rentals**, and the possibility of experiencing "over-tourism" in the village - we should prevent Victoria becoming a place like other tourism-dependent cities in the world that has become 'over-crowded with souvenir shops, crowds, tour buses and rowdy bars', putting local infrastructure under enormous seasonal strain.
- Page 8, Section 1.8.4 of the Plan - Wonders if discussion had taken place within the Planning Board regarding **what an ideal balance between commercial and residential** in the Central Core would look like.

Regarding Traffic and parking, the following questions were asked:

- Page 17, Policy 4-20 of the Plan - do we know what **"significant traffic volume"** is, and how is it defined?
- Page 45, Policy 5-24 - would like to see **"traffic"** added to the list of provisions.

And the following opinions were shared:

- Page 19, Section 4.3.10. **Automobile Parking** of the Plan - wording is too "wishy-washy", would like to see firmer language.

General comments, not impacting the content of the plan, included:

- Concern about the Village's ability to consistently enforce bylaws.
- Gratitude for the work done to date by Planning Board members, past and present, and staff, by members of the public who've contributed over the past years of this process.
- Appreciation for the conduct of this meeting, and for the public participation, being a critically-important part of the democratic process, which has led to this being a very productive meeting.

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Additionally, clarifying questions about the following procedures were discussed and answered:

- How the dedication of parkland works, in regards to subdividing land. (Page 31, Policy 4-67 of the Official Plan)
- How to register a property for heritage designation.
- The development rezoning process, which is required to include public meetings as part of the process. Changing the Development Bylaw from the current to future zoning allowed in the Official Plan is a decision that can be taken at the municipal

level. Changes to the Official Plan itself require provincial approval. (See the Planning Act, and the draft Development Bylaw Section 12).

- As well provincial requirements and procedures governing Official Plans and Development Bylaws.

5. Adjournment

With no further business, Chair Councillor Gilbert adjourned the meeting at 7:33pm.

Approved by Chair Eric Gilbert