

# Museum supporters rally for Site 8

## City considers OCP exemption for Polygon's 12-storey tower proposal

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After 30 years of looking for a new place to hang the past, North Vancouver's Museum and Archives may have found a new home – but they'll have to make a compelling business case before they can move in.

Council is considering a 12-storey, 117-unit residential tower perched on a commercial podium at West Esplanade and Carrie Cates Court. The site includes 16,155 square feet which could be given to the city, potentially for the museum.

Council sent the project to public hearing Monday despite several councillors expressing reservations over the lack of a business plan.

There should be no further costs to the city or any requests for funds, according to Coun. Craig Keating.

The city provided \$100,000 for the museum to undertake several studies, including a business plan. That business plan was not complete in time for Monday's council meeting, much to the chagrin of Coun. Rod Clark.

"The taxpayer should have the right to know that they're not giving away millions to a developer who's going to walk away," Clark said.

Council voted against putting the museum in the Pipe Shop earlier this year, which Clark called a much more suitable location. "(Site 8) won't be nearly as attractive, it'll be much more difficult to find. And I have to see those business numbers, that business case, before I can support it."

A few rows of the council chamber were occupied by museum supporters clad in blue T-shirts who were there to advocate for a new home for the museum.

Serving as city council's representative to the museum commission, Coun. Don Bell supported putting the museum in a new city-owned building.

"This provides an opportunity for the museum that was lost," he said, calling the project a way to "reinforce a cultural precinct in Lower Lonsdale."

The site is the last option in the neighbourhood, according to NVMA commission chair Sanford Osler.

"This site will allow us to meet our mission without requiring additional ongoing financial support from the two North Vancouver municipalities," he said.

The need for a new building is pressing, noted Mayor Darrell Mussatto.

"We do need a space for the museum. The building it's in now is tired, it's old, it's done."

The museum's finances were an acute concern at the meeting, particularly after plans for a museum on the Shipyards were scuttled when NVMA organizers fell short of raising \$5 million before Dec. 31, 2015.

Without a solid business plan, Coun. Holly Back said she was concerned the city might end up trying to figure out what to do with 16,155 square feet of empty space.

"I much prefer the money so that we can do with it what we want rather than getting a space that we're not sure what we're going to do with if the museum can't come up with the funding," she said.

It would cost the city approximately \$11 million to find a similar space, according to city staff.

If the project is approved, Polygon would pay the city \$8.7 million. That payment would depend on the city selling 120 Carrie Cates Court and its share of Rogers Lane to Polygon at market value.

Back was also wary of the building's height of 138 feet.

The building would be far taller than the 75-foot limit allowed under the official community plan. However, the site is considered a special study area by the OCP which: "indicates a willingness to consider density transfer from a donor site," according to a staff report.

That transfer could take the form of 18,553 square feet from a city-owned site at 105 Carrie Cates Court, the site of a forthcoming gallery.

The building's floor space ratio – which measures total floor space against the size of the lot – would be 4.07. The project's total floor area is 160,708 square feet.

The occupants of the building's commercial podium was of special interest to Coun. Linda Buchanan, who expressed concern the corner would be filled with banks, insurance companies, and other businesses that tend to turn out the lights very easy.

The project also includes four levels of underground parking housing 266 stalls, including six spots that would be given to the city.