

Chris Moehr: 4545 William Head Road

Speaking Notes: Council Members/CAO July 15, 2024

Re: Submission to Public Hearing 4499 Leefield Road

Preamble: As a consequence of 58 communications from APRM members in the past 6 days, at which point I stopped counting, I feel justified in stating that I am speaking here tonight on behalf of the APRM.

I have organized my comments under the following three categories: Process, Risks, and Resolution.

Process – What you should as members of Council know is that there has been significant confusion and misunderstanding amongst your residents regarding awareness of this event and the submission requirements for tonight’s “public hearing”. Among the many things we have learned is that a large number of persons would, out of routine, showed up tonight at 7:00 p.m. rather than the required 6:00 p.m. – and what does that say for those working folks who still work 9:00 to 5:00 and likely have to commute. That said, in consultation with staff, the APRM has done its best to provide our members and others with what is required in order to allow those who wish to do so to participate. I will add that in 38 years in Metchosis I cannot recall a ‘public hearing’ being hosted within our Council Chambers – the norm has always been to host same at the Community Hall in order to accommodate the largest number of participants, and never, ever in the height of the summer months. According to our Fire Code regulations, the maximum capacity within the Council Chambers is

approx. 60 persons, including Council and staff. Not very supportive of a large attendance. Other comments/questions include: why was this important public meeting not referenced in the Metchosin Muse, which has a far greater readership in Metchosin than the Goldstream Gazette, which is where I presume it was advertised. Not surprisingly, when one adds all of these factors up, it raises the spectrum for many residents, that this is one sure way to keep attendance down. I do not particularly share that view, i.e., that it was intentional, but these process comments are not without significance and perhaps lessons could and should be learned here.

Risks – Others have, and I am certain will continue to speak, to the risks of approving this application for a re-zoning in contravention of our OCP. The aspect of precedent setting is indeed real and potential applicants waiting in the wings are, or should be, well known to you. Also, do I have to remind you that, in varying words, each member of Council, in the context of their election campaign in 2022, indicated their commitment to our OCP – I don't think so. Should this re-zoning application receive approval tonight or subsequently, it can only result in a lack of trust and faith in members of Council in the minds of countless Metchosin residents – which I suggest is not at all a desirable outcome.

Resolution – Split zones are and have always been problematic. Some members of Council have likened this application to what is known as a variance which generally focus on set backs and the like. Hopefully you are all now aware that 'variances', when they occur, are within the confines of our OCP.

Further, dangling carrots to the proponents of this application, especially in the guise that it could be a fit within the 'affordable housing' initiative of the provincial government is a disservice to the applicants and does little but prolong the pain. This application should have, and could have, been dealt with many, many months ago.

In summary, the APRM, on behalf of its 416 members, and in light of the above, hereby request that you heed the wise words of our Planner and the wishes of a highly significant number of residents, and deny this rezoning application.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Chris Moehr
President, APRM