

City of North Van may forgo cash for below-market housing

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More than two years after they started scouring North Vancouver, Marta Carlucci and Natsuko Osafune, Osafune's daughters Mia and Aina, and Mackenzie Stonehocker may bring co-housing to Chesterfield Avenue. photo Cindy Goodman, North Shore News

Co-housing is going public.

City of North Vancouver residents will have their chance to weigh in on a 27-unit co-housing project slated for Chesterfield Avenue, following council's 6-1 decision to push the project to public hearing Monday.

If approved, the project would consolidate and rezone three lots at 2121, 2129 and 2137 Chesterfield Ave. to allow for a five-storey development alongside a mix of two- and three-storey townhouses.

The lone vote against the project came from Coun. Rod Clark, who noted the prohibitive cost of buying into the development.

"As far as I'm concerned, (if) you're making \$100,000 a year, you're on your own with respect to housing," Clark said. "Co-housing is subsidizing people who are making well above the average income in the city, and therefore I can't support it with tax dollars."

The project includes eight units offered at 25 per cent below market rates in perpetuity, a feature of the proposal Coun. Craig Keating highlighted in his remarks.

"If that ain't working for the little guy I don't know what the heck is working for the little guy," he said.

The notion of not sending the proposal to public hearing "beggars the imagination," according to Keating.

The below-market units would count as an in-kind contribution, meaning the city would "forgo a cash contribution of approximately \$1.657 million," according to a city staff report. However, the units would be a public benefit in perpetuity.

The city's only other co-housing development, Quayside Village, has been a success for 20 years, noted Coun. Linda Buchanan.

"We need to look at these creative solutions that people are, quite frankly, coming up with faster than we are as a municipality," she said.

Mayor Darrell Mussatto agreed, reminding his colleagues that after some initial controversy, Quayside was "extremely well received."

The project's floor space ratio – which measures a development's total floor space against its lot size – would be 2.28, an increase from the initially proposed 1.88 FSR.

The public hearing is tentatively scheduled for July 9 at city hall.