

Royal Oak Community Association (ROCA) Community Forum regarding Doral Forest Park Development

Date: Jan 30, 2019

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: Royal Oak Middle School, Multi-Purpose Room

Recording Secretary: Camilla Brown

1. **7:04 pm - Art Roberts (Director) called the Forum to order.**

2. **Welcomes and Introductions.**
 - a. Members of the ROCA Executive present: Ian Vantreight (Registrar), Richard Michaels (Director), Dennis Grimmer (Director), Art Roberts (Director), Mark McInnes (Past President).
 - b. Skooke Roberts introduced the Forum's independent Chair / Facilitator, Susan Belford.

3. **Susan Belford gave an explanation of the format of the forum .**
 - a. Susan Belford circulated copies of her Doral Forest Park information sheet to attendees.
 - i. *(Marsha H)* Requested rewording of info sheet to make it clear that the Doral Forest Park Development would not only be the tallest building in its vicinity, but in the entire area of Royal Oak.
 - b. Susan Belford explained that during the session , the topics relating to the development will be approached systematically, asking the following questions:
 - i. What are the positives?
 - ii. What are the negatives?
 - iii. Is there any additional information needed from the developer?
 - iv. Do we want the developer to make a presentation about this topic in the future?

4. **Susan Belford invited participants to voice topics they would like to be discussed.**
 - a. *(R W)* Density, and height of buildings within that density.
 - b. *(A W)* Environment.
 - c. *(Erin L)* Drainage.
 - d. *(David H)* Extra traffic.
 - e. *(Sandy J)* Amenities.
 - f. *(Mark M)* Affordability.
 - g. *(?)* Impact on park.
 - h. *(Amey L)* Noise.
 - i. *(R W)* Light pollution.
 - j. *(S W)* Visual impact of the building.
 - k. *(R W)* Impact on community values.
 - l. *(Katherine W)* The setbacks outlined in the proposal are too small.

5. First topic of discussion: Height.

- a. Positives.
 - i. *(A W)* It adds more density for people's homes. We need more housing.
 - ii. *(Sandy J)* There is variety in the proposed heights of the buildings.
- b. Negatives.
 - i. *(David H)* It is a tall building which is proposed to be built on already high land. Its height will make it stick out like a sore thumb.
 - ii. *(Amey L)* It will block the light.
 - iii. *(?)* It will cast a shadow over the park.
 - iv. *(Jim D)* Tall buildings take a long time to build, so construction will take place over a long time.
 - v. *(R W)* Privacy issues. It means neighbours will be overlooked. There'll be more noise pollution, which also filters into privacy.
 - vi. *(S W)* It will create shade over the trees.
 - vii. *(J K)* Eight stories is double the official OCP height.
 - viii. *(Amey L)* Lots of people use that park, they come to relax and play, not to see a skyscraper. It will change the feeling of the park. Negative impact on park experience.
 - ix. *(R W)* The height also connects to the depth of the parking area, so will require a deeper base and parking hole.
- c. Is there any additional information needed from the developer?
 - i. *(J K)* What is the blasting schedule?
 - ii. *(Erin L)* Information about natural area covenant.
 - iii. *(David W)* Are these to be flat- or peak-roofed buildings?
 - iv. *(Amey L)* Why are they trying to go outside the laws of Saanich? Entitlement of developer.
 - v. *(Erin L)* There should be questions for Saanich as well, not just the developer. It would be good to know what they think of all this.
 - vi. *(Jim D)* I'd like to see the 1996 Covenant relating to height.
 - vii. *(Amey L)* Impact of density on medical services and emergency? We have the Berwick elderly folk using the medical facilities already. If you add 152 times that number of people, what kind of demand will they be dealing with?
 - a. *(Susan Belford)* I'm writing that over here on other board as developer might not be able to answer, but maybe Saanich will.
- d. The assembled agree they would like the developer to provide a presentation on Height.
 - i. *(Graham L)* I would like a presentation from the developer himself, not his marketing manager.
 - ii.

6. Second topic of discussion: Density.

- a. Positives.

- i. *(Graham L)* Saanich does need density.
 - ii. *(Mark M)* There's potential for affordable housing when there's density.
 - iii. *(Jim D)* In reality profitability will increase — a positive for the developer.
- b. Negatives.
 - i. *(David H)* I would dispute that we need more density in this area, we have enough with the existing developments.
 - ii. *(Paul W)* This proposal was first brought on in 1993 and then again in 1998, and every time the developer proposes more units. Can they please freeze the design and stop increasing units?
 - iii. *(Amey L)* It will create too much traffic.
 - iv. *(Greg H)* The need to provide affordable housing has been recognised and incorporated into the official OCP plan — which would exactly oppose this development
 - v. *(David B)* Density is visibly bad, especially to the main thoroughfare entering Victoria. It will create a huge negative visual impact.
 - vi. *(Danny F)* Impact on environment, in particular to the park.
- c. Is there any additional information needed from the developer?
 - i. *(Jan E)* I'd like to know what percentage of the final units will be designated affordable housing.
 - ii. *(R W)* Rental units: what the plan is and number of them?
 - iii. *(J K)* Will they be allowing short term rentals, such as Airbnb?
 - iv. *(David W)* It has on the sheet that complementary bikes and bus tickets will be given out, who get those?
 - a. *(Susan Belford)* They are suggested traffic control measurement, they are a possibility and no detail has been given.
 - v. *(S W)* The practical meaning of FSR ?
 - vi. *(D H)* How many units are available to families?
 - vii. *(Sandy J)* Does he already have permission to build at this density?
 - a. *(Susan Belford)* He hasn't been granted permission yet.
 - b. *(Sandy J)* Are we talking about him not building at all, or are we asking him to build at a lesser density and height? Or, is our issue only with the eight-storey building? At a lesser height and density many of these issues will still be there.
 - c. *(Susan Belford)* The executives will work out how to address these issues, and how they connect.
- d. The assembled agree they would like the developer to provide a presentation on Density.

7. Third topic of discussion: Drainage.

- a. Positives.
 - i. *(Mark M)* More of a neutral. There are some examples of natural water filtration, the Wilkinson Bridge in B.C. uses plants and gravel — there's some interesting architectural options which are visually interesting.

- b. Negatives.
 - i. *(Erin L)* The developer talked about adding lots of trees, but are they mature? Water might get misplaced, I'd be interested to know more.
 - ii. *(Greg H)* We're concerned with not only storm water on the surface but underground, so this double-deep parking lot has potential to interfere with ground water.
- c. Is there any additional information needed from the developer?
 - i. *(Donna C)* Wondering where storm water is going? Is it draining into the lake, or into concrete? Where's it going during building stage?
 - ii. *(R W)* Wondering what the impact might be on neighbouring stratas, if it's not managed properly? How will it affect neighbours?
- d. The assembled agree they would like the developer to provide a presentation on Drainage.
 - i. *(Erin L)* Is someone drafting something to ask pointed questions? They could give us a glossed over presentation. We want particulars.
 - a. *(Susan Belford)* It will go out of my hands and be presented.

8. Fourth topic of discussion: Environment.

- a. Positives.
 - i. *(Graham L)* If the developers thought of things like roof gardens to regulate temperature of building it could have more of a positive effect on the environment of the building and surrounding areas.
- b. Negatives.
 - i. *(Donna C)* Everything — the whole thing is against the environment.
 - ii. *(Katherine W)* I'm concerned about aquifer just within park boundary and how the excavation will affect that. Also, loss of urban forest.
 - iii. *(Marsha H)* Almost every mature tree in that property will be cut, including root systems currently doing hard work, there's no way you can counter that with planting a lot of young small trees. It's going to take many years before replacement trees grow.
 - iv. *(Marilyn H)* Impact on animal population. With all the construction, are we going to lose a lot of deer and owls?
- c. Is there any additional information needed from the developer?
 - i. *(Amey L)* I bought my property because of the trees — they give me peace — will they be removed? Trees affect all of nature. The entire side south side of their lot is lined with trees.
 - ii. *(A W)* The developer wasn't planning on replacing trees with the same types of trees — evergreens to be replaced with deciduous and shrubs.
 - a. *(Sandy J)* I think there's an important distinction to be made regarding the perimeter. It would be easy to say: "We have this planned for the outside," and then distort the issues.
 - b. *(A W)* We want to see what the plan looks like, not just internally, but external as well.
 - iii. *(Graham L)* It would be nice to know the developer's historical record on his properties.

- iv. *(Donna C)* I'd like to know about any green things they are planning, green roof, solar panels, etc.?
 - a. *(Susan Belford)* They do plan to make it solar-ready.
- d. The assembled agree they would like the developer to provide a presentation on Environment. They would also like ROCA to do some enquiries with B.C., CRD, and the city on this topic.
 - i. *(S W)* I don't think it should be restricted to the environment, but an independent study on these topics across the board. We know the presentation is going to be biased, I'd like to see the positive impacts on these subjects from the developers.

9. Fifth topic of discussion: Traffic.

- a. Positives.
 - i. *(Rodney F)* Additional bike resources proposed by developer.
- b. Negatives.
 - i. *(David H)* In terms of bike resources, they'll have to widen Elk Lane Road, there's not enough room. I believe there's three separate road entrances in only 200/300 metres, and then you've got the entrance to the park. It's going to be chaos. Add a bike in there and you'll get a crash.
 - ii. *(Margot H)* My concern is the potential impact on Elk Lake Road.
 - iii. *(S W)* No street parking. Road would have to widen to get parking.
 - iv. *(Burt S)* The traffic lights in the area are under stress as it is, only a small number of cars can get through the lights. There'll be more than 150 people living in the development, when you include visitors coming and going, it'll have a cumulative effect.
 - v. *(Graham L)* There's no coherent overall traffic plan by developer and that's going to cause problems for cyclists, bus travellers, and for those gas-guzzling cars.
 - vi. *(R W)* This all translates into safety issues.
 - vii. *(Marilyn H)* There are no crosswalks, and it's dangerous to get to the bus stop.
 - viii. *(Sally B)* Pedestrian safety will be at risk.
 - ix. *(S W)* The parking ratio is 1:5, which is standard in Saanich, but not sufficient for the area. Because it's on the apex of Elk Lane you don't see many people walking to the village or cycling for groceries unless they're fairly athletic. There'll be a lot of vehicles, and not a lot of pedestrians travelling to the surrounding amenities.
- c. Is there any additional information needed from the developer?
 - i. *(Donna C)* The traffic study by the developer should be redone during peak time. When they did it before the schools were out.
 - ii. *(A W)* I heard that the results of one study were confidential. Perhaps we should organise an independent, transparent study.
 - iii. *(Paul B)* We need further information about the electric car offer.
- d. The assembled agree they would like the developer to provide a presentation on Traffic.

10. Sixth topic of discussion: Amenities.

- a. Positives
 - i. No discussion
- b. Negatives.
 - i. No discussion
- c. Is there any additional information needed from the developer?
 - i. *(Multiple participants)* What are the amenities listed?
 - a. *(Susan Belford)* The one amenity listed relates to bike lanes, with a bike-fixing stop. But Saanich doesn't like that plan. Developer has suggested possible traffic management offering, but as far as I'm aware there's no confirmation of amenities on table. There might be some forthcoming
 - b. *(Richard M.)* This is an opportunity for the community as a whole to step up and tell Saanich what we want to add value to our community. Those of you who lived in different communities, you know what makes a community better, this what Saanich and the developers are asking for. This is an important point if the project goes forward.
 - c. Susan Belford asked participants what amenities they want to be put forward.
 - a. *(J K)* More buses. There's currently hardly any. They don't need to be large buses, could be small ones.
 - b. *(A W)* More protection for different strata's to maintain security.
 - c. *(Amey L)* Leave the trees on south border of their property.
 - d. *(Danny F)* Ask the developers about park amenities
 - e. *(Brett B)* A significant financial contribution to Beaver Lake Park. I know the CRD wanted to fix up washrooms and there was a shortage of money.
 - f. *(Helen A)* Somewhere good for children to play.
 - g. *(S W)* A secure storage for canoes and kayaks in the park and access to water.
 - h. *(Greg H)* Provide space indoor and outdoor for day-care facilities. Regional day-care also.
 - i. *(Mark M)* Eating into the developer's profit margin decreases their incentive to do the project. Think about compromises for density.
 - j. *(Amey L)* Why would we give concessions saying 'if we could have this then we'll take that?'
 - i. *(Susan Belford)* Making a list of potential amenities you want to see is to add to the conversation. It's to see what ROCA wants. (meaning - what ROCA could pursue for the Community)
 - ii. *(R W)* I don't think amenities should be tied in to number of units.
- d. The assembled agree they wouldn't like the developer to provide a presentation on Amenities at this point.

11. Seventh topic of discussion: Affordability.

- a. Positives.
 - i. No discussion
- b. Negatives.
 - i. General discussion around how affordability is subjective and it's not clear what the target market for the units is at this point.
 - ii. *(David B)* They will be expensive units.
 - iii. *(Donna C)* They were going to charge \$50k for each unit who want an extra parking spot.
 - iv. *(Mark M)* Adding housing supplies to the market does not equal affordability.
- c. Is there any additional information needed from the developer?
 - i. *(Jim D)* I would like to know what percentage of units would be affordable. I want to know clearly, the size of the unit and the price.
 - ii. *(Jan E)* I prefer the term 'accessible' over 'affordable.' We need to look at housing that's accessible to people at a certain level who currently cannot afford a reasonable dwelling. There are lots of people that can't afford to buy a home. There are formulas used to determine accessibility. Affordability can relate to lifestyle.
 - a. *(Susan Belford)* This is a big question, perhaps more on a federal level.
 - b. *(Mark M)* The old conversation about supply and demand and municipalities and developers working together is out-dated. What you ask developers, when you ask for affordability, is asking them to move heaven, to be a leader when the government aren't doing enough. This cuts into their margins, which are their incentive. We need to go back to the politicians and put in a framework about affordability. It's got to be targeted and deliberate. Hopefully there'll be a compromise between everyone that's acceptable.
 - c. *(Susan Belford)* ROCA will be saying to Saanich that we need a framework.
 - iii. *(Graham L)* I'd like to ask what the history of the developer is regarding affordability? And what market segments he is aiming for?
 - iv. *(Margot H)* I think it's fair to ask them what price range he's aiming for. He doesn't need to take on the whole issue of affordability, but just focus on what in the project is affordable, for whom. The developer needs to communicate his plan.
- d. The assembled agree they wouldn't like the developer to provide a presentation on Affordability at this point.

12. Eighth topic of discussion: the Park.

- a. Positives.
 - i. *(Jim D)* Residents won't have to drive to the park, they will walk.

b. Negatives.

- i. *(Susan Belford)* We have already noted that the development is the closest to the park, there will be shading of trees, potential damage to aquifer, and concern about impacts on wildlife.
 - ii. *(Jan E)* I'm concerned it's going to increase traffic in the park. It's a great shortcut from Elk Lake Rd. to West Saanich Rd. and people might cut through. Beaver Lake Road could see impact.
 - iii. *(Paul W)* I walk in the park regularly. Because it's CRD rather than Saanich, there's more chance for things to go wrong. It's not properly maintained, The CRD is going to have to step-up and maintain it in a better way if there's to be increased demand on park infrastructure.
 - iv. *(Danny F)* There'll be increased costs for maintenance and liability as well.
 - v. *(R W)* When you walk into the park, there's no walking paths — it's just for cars. Having more people entering the park by foot will increase the risk of someone getting hurt. CRD are going to have to look at improving safety.
 - vi. *NB., post-Forum point made to Susan Belford: Concern for over-use of Park due to proposed density.*
- d. The assembled agree they would like the developer to provide a presentation on the Park.

13. Ninth topic of discussion: Noise

a. Positives.

- i. No discussion.

b. Negatives.

- i. *(R W)* Construction noise will last for four years, then additional noise from human occupation.
 - ii. *(Donna C)* There's been studies showing how noise impact negatively affects health, especially older people. It's also bad for wildlife — we're just getting our owls back. It's going to change the bird population.
 - iii. *(R W)* We're a senior population. Four years is a significant time frame for our age group.
 - iv. *(S W)* Is the blasting more impactful on different types of rock?
 - a. *(Susan Belford)* I don't have a firm answer to that. I know the blasting will be on granite, which is very hard.
 - v. *(Graham L)* Negative effect on property value on surrounding properties during construction phase.
- c. Is there any additional information needed from the developer?
- i. *(Amey L)* How much of that noise will be from blasting, and will there be a schedule?
 - a. *(Susan Belford)* I think that's explained on the info sheet.
 - ii. *(Jan E)* We live fairly close, but not immediately adjacent, and if we were looking at four years of blasting and tree-cutting we would be asking what kind of compensation is available. Either as a strata or individually.
 - iii. *(J K)* We live right next door. Depending on the extent of the blasting, what about damage to foundations and walls?

- d. The assembled agree they would like the developer to provide a presentation on Noise.

14. Tenth topic of discussion: Pollution.

- a. Positives.
 - i. No discussion.
- b. Negatives.
 - i. *(R W)* Light and noise pollution together — for me, it's one category. The development is going to cause dust for four years, neighbouring strata's are going to be affected.
- c. Is there any additional information needed from the developer?
 - i. *(R W)* I want to know how they'll mitigate light pollution, from cars and lights above sidewalks.

15. Eleventh topic of discussion: Visual Impact of Development.

- a. Positives.
 - i. *(Greg H)* Beauty is in the eye of the beholder: there might be a nice view from the units.
- b. Negatives.
 - i. *(Katherine W)* Viewscapes which are meant to be protected are possibly going to be eroded.
 - ii. *(Danny F)* Is there some kind of berm planned between there and the highway?
 - iii. *(David B)* If you want to see how it'll turn out, there's a similar development near Christmas Lake.
 - iv. *(R W)* Our area is all strata's with townhouses, they have a certain feel and community. This proposed development isn't in-keeping, the size seems to be out of place with the current environment, and may have a social impact. Especially if you have renters — right now there's a few but they're far between. So again, we have a certain community of owners who will be disrupted.
 - v. *(Graham L)* The development that's in-construction just down the road is a mess, that's what I worry about this one being. Potentially a worse mess because it's a huge development. It's an imposition on the people who live there.
 - vi. *(Danny F)* I don't think six- and eight-storey buildings provides proper visual contact with the park — it will be in conflict.
 - vii. *(R W)* There's a huge footprint, when you consider all four buildings.
- c. Is there any additional information needed from the developer?
 - i. *(Paul B)* The choice of materials, look, and design can have a big effect on desirability. More information about this, please.
 - ii. *(Marsha H)* I would like to know more about the link between visual and environmental.
 - a. *(Susan W)* They are calling the landscaping part of it 'The Forest.' But you see all the mature trees being removed and replaced with deciduous trees. When I look at the plan itself, I wonder why it's called a forest at all.
 - iii. *(Roger S)* I'd like them to float balloons at a height of eight-storeys so we can comprehend it more clearly.

- d. The assembled agree they would like the developer to provide a presentation on Visual Impact of Development.

16. Twelfth topic of discussion: Community Values.

- i. *(Marsha H)* The Local Area Plan reflects Royal Oak's community values, I'd like them to be honoured.
- ii. *(Paul B)* Viability of park lands should be priority.
- iii. *(Margot H)* It seems to me that some of these points should be directed to the city?
 - a. *(Susan Belford)* That's true. One of the things I'll be doing is making notes on whether it's a developer-only question, or plus Saanich.
 - b. *(Amey L)* Why is this just Royal Oak and developer? Why isn't Saanich an equal part in the discussion? It should be part of the whole Saanich municipality.
 - c. *(Susan Belford)* Typically developers work with Saanich planning, and it doesn't go to council until the developer has consulted with neighbourhood and refined the design.
 - d. *(Graham L)* The Royal Oak community is developing rapidly, that should be sustainable and fool-proof.

17. Thirteenth topic of discussion: Setbacks.

- i. *(R W)* Save existing tree systems and keep the development as far away from neighbouring property boundaries as possible.
- ii. *(Margot H)* I think given that it's next to the park you need even more green space around it. So that it doesn't infringe on the park.
- iii. *(J K)* It says on the sheet that a variance was required for the northern boundary, is that this developer?
 - a. *(Susan Belford)* No, that was a point made at the last meeting — I don't know if it's true — the boundary has previously required variants to change it.
- iv. *(R W)* Would setbacks be part of the landscape plan?
 - a. *(Susan Belford)* Yes, and Saanich would have the landscape plan, perhaps you can find it on the developer's website.

18. Additional topic of discussion: Prioritising developer presentations.

- a. *(Joy W)* There's been a lot of topics discussed this evening and we want the developer to present on almost everything. I wonder if there's a way of setting priorities? It's probably not feasible to address everything
 - i. *(Susan Belford)* The executive will make these decisions, we don't have the time this evening to make consensus.
 - ii. *(Joy W)* So will you let the executives know that prioritising would be welcomed, with feedback from membership to validate?
 - iii. *(Jan E)* Could ROCA put out an online survey for the membership, which might help the developer decide?

19. Susan Belford made closing remarks and let everyone know that if they have any further comments they should talk to her afterwards.

20. The Forum was adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Post-Forum Amenities Ideas from ROCA exec. members (not tabled at Open Forum)

- a. From Barb S (not present at meeting). Community Amenities suggestions:
- Bike lane enhancement and extension on the east side of Elk Lake Drive up to the last entrance to the development. Currently it peters out at the top (north end).
 - Bike lane turn lane at the top or main entrance to be safe for all ages and abilities.
 - Sidewalk only until the first gate on the north end into Elk Lake Park.
 - CRD discussion on trail enhancement through the park to the dog park. Currently you have to cross the weird intersection at the entrance to get to the dog park area.
 - Bike parking cages on site to facilitate safe and secure bike parking with power for e-bikes to charge
 - Regular bike and e-bike parking and power for residents underground -like cars!
 - The bus stop on the east side near the development should align with the proposed crosswalk to ensure safety getting off the bus if coming from shops at Royal Oak and Broadmead.
 - Transit stop placement will be important at the top (north end) of the development so that people don't have to walk down the hill to the bus stop at Berwick.
 - Bike enhancements at the intersection of Elk Lake and Royal Oak Drive for bikes proceeding east to Broadmead. This could be a green painted section at the front of traffic on the left turn lane and possible road surface notice of bikes sharing with the left turn lane. Currently there are enhancements (bike lane) on the south side proceeding north.
 - Currently it is impossible for scooters, bikes or elderly with walkers to proceed quickly and safely to Broadmead shopping center once they cross over the overpass and the transit island. There are stairs but no access via paved pathway. Having a paved pathway would facilitate people walking as well as those with disabilities to get to the shops.
 - Affordable housing component.
 - Developer provide a few e-bikes for residents.
 - Have an onsite indoor bike cleaning area along with dog washing area.
- b. From Art R: Widening bus stops, to avoid blockage of vehicle traffic (which stacks up behind any stopped bus that cannot pull over sufficiently).