

Dear GVHBA Members,

The following summarizes GVHBA's actions regarding the City of Vancouver's "Green Rezoning Policy":

- On Thursday, February 4, Vancouver city staff presented a report to City Council recommending that all rezonings be built to LEED Gold equivalency (or Built Green Gold with Energuide 82 for those projects where LEED NC-1 doesn't apply).
- This recommendation is a follow-up to an action in the EcoDensity Charter (which was approved by Council in 2008), where LEED Gold was to be implemented by January 1, 2010. Due to the economy and staffing issues, city staff was not able to consult appropriately with industry and felt the deadline should be pushed back to July 2010.
- Approximately 10 speakers from the development industry and associations advised City Council that there are significant legal liabilities, and warranty and insurance issues that had to be ironed out before this policy was approved. Some developers had letters from warranty companies stating they also needed to be consulted before the city moved forward.
- I was one of those speakers, and specifically mentioned that third-party green building programs, including BuiltGreen, were never intended to be used as regulatory tools. I also advised that the Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC) CEO and President Thomas Mueller said the same thing about LEED in a letter to CHBA. Urban Development Institute Executive Director Maureen Enser pointed out the need to further assess the effectiveness of green building technologies and costs.
- There were a couple of speakers who supported moving to LEED certification, namely CaGBC Board of Director Alex Zimmerman, and Vancouver architect Peter Busby. They pointed out there are a number of Vancouver buildings already built to LEED Gold, and the issues raised by industry about warranty, etc, could be "worked around".
- Despite the overwhelming information provided by industry, City Council superceded our concerns and the staff's report with a motion they had written prior to the presentations even starting. They unanimously approved a motion that "all buildings" (still to be determined if this is all rezonings, or all new buildings) would be registered for LEED Gold by March 1, and LEED Gold certification by early 2011. Those buildings that don't fall under LEED will be built to BuiltGreen Gold with Energuide 82.
- Council recommended staff continue to consult with industry until July, but obviously this has no meaning since the policy comes into effect in March. It was

quite apparent that Council knew exactly what they wanted to approve, and no amount of proof about the potential implications would sway their decision. Councillor Suzanne Anton mentioned she had not had time to review the motion appropriately before the meeting, and unsuccessfully attempted to change it back to what staff had originally recommended. She eventually voted for the new motion along with everyone else.

- Mayor Gregor Robertson summed up the City Council's true intentions best when he said the timing of this was excellent, referring to the global media presence in town for the Olympics, and said this policy would "draw attention to this City's leadership."
- On Friday, February 5, GVHBA CEO Peter Simpson wrote a letter to CHBA – BC President Bob Deeks, advising since CHBA – BC owns the BuiltGreen BC program, and that because BuiltGreen was a voluntary, market-driven program, CHBA – BC needs to request that the City of Vancouver withdraw any reference to the BuiltGreen program from its policy. We are concerned that Council's decision has imposed regulatory requirements on industry to protect the interests of third-party green building labels.
- Also, CHBA National President (and local Surrey builder) Gary Friend sent a letter to Mayor Robertson, City Council, Vancouver City Solicitor and Director of Legal Services, and the CHBA Executive Board. In reference to the city's policy report, he asked the City to desist: calling CHBA a stakeholder; stating that CHBA holds a proprietary interest in BuiltGreen; and implying that CHBA supports the city in this manner. He also stated "CHBA does not appreciate being linked to any government initiative to embed any of these green labels in a regulatory regime."

I will continue to keep you updated as events unfold. Please contact me at either amy@gvhba.org or 778-373-9784 should you have any questions or comments.

Best regards,

Amy Spencer-Chubey
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Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association