

CARSA UPDATE OCT 10, 2011

Saanich Council postponed the UVic CARSA application for variances for a second time and, more importantly, unequivocally directed UVic to engage in meaningful consultation with the community at a Committee of the Whole Meeting on October 4. In order to qualify as meaningful, consultation must be such that legitimate community concerns are reflected in the final proposal and project.

This is a powerful positive step forward as it will provide residents and residents association, working co-operatively with UVic, the opportunity to create a project that is compatible with the character of the surrounding communities as well as meeting UVic's needs. We will now direct our efforts to creating an appropriate consultation process.

It has been an intense and rewarding campaign to increase awareness of this project within the greater community. See below for more details.

Thanks to the many residents for their work, letters and deputations as well as to the executives of the neighbouring residents associations whose co-operative efforts enabled this successful outcome. Thanks also to Saanich councillors for their support of residents and our communities.

Background: From the time we learned of the project in mid-July, CBRA has maintained the community was not adequately consulted regarding a project which has the potential to significantly and negatively impact our community. UVic requires Saanich approval because it is requesting height and parking variances. On August 8, after hearing deputations from residents, Cadboro Bay Residents Association and Gordon Head Residents Association, Saanich Council postponed the project asking UVic to do additional community consultation.

On September 8, UVic held an open house which many residents described as an information meeting where UVic told the communities of its plans. UVic asked residents for input on only three cosmetic features of the project; no input was requested on the substantive issues of siting, traffic and height. Residents were given a maximum of two business days to understand all the ramifications and provide input to UVic on the proposed complex 18,000 square metre development. CBRA made a substantial submission to UVic regarding the project. It is available on this website.

As soon as UVic scheduled its second appearance at Saanich council, hardworking residents created and distributed leaflets in the community advising UVic students and faculty as well as other residents of the CARSA project and the opportunity to speak at the council meeting.

CBRA representatives met with the president and vice president of UVic on September 21 asking for meaningful consultation and comprehensive, not piecemeal, planning in Cadboro Bay on both the CARSA and Queenswood developments. In order to qualify as meaningful, consultation must occur near the beginning of the project and community feedback must be incorporated and reflected in the final proposal or project.

CBRA also contacted and attempted to liaise with the other residents associations directly impacted by CARSA: Gordon Head Residents Association, Mount Tolmie Residents Association and North Henderson Residents Association. All the residents associations agreed consultation had been unsatisfactory. North Henderson Residents Association and Cadboro Bay Residents

Association issued a joint press release asking for a hold on the project pending meaningful consultation and comprehensive community planning.

On October 4, UVic appeared before Saanich council to request approval of the variances for a second time. The project, except for minor cosmetic features, was unchanged from that presented to council in August. The President of CBRA spoke to request:

1. a hold on the project in order to allow time for meaningful community consultation using modern techniques such as 3D modeling to help residents understand this complex project, and
2. comprehensive, not piecemeal, planning of major projects in Cadboro Bay.

Many residents from Cadboro Bay and Gordon Head also spoke, objecting to and questioning various features of the project including siting, height, traffic issues and the 7-storey car parkade. Athletes and UVic representatives spoke in favour of an unamended CARSA development. Everyone who wished to speak was given the opportunity although many residents left the meeting without speaking when the meeting continued beyond midnight. After discussion and questions, at 1:30 am on October 5, Saanich councillors voted unanimously to postpone the project and unequivocally directed UVic to do meaningful community consultation; i.e., at a time in the project and in a manner such that residents legitimate concerns are reflected in the final proposal or project.

UVic has since announced a six month delay of the project to allow time for appropriate consultation. CBRA will liaise with the other residents associations to shape a constructive consultation process.

Elizabeth Borek
President, Cadboro Bay Residents Association
Email: catalyst007@shaw.ca
Telephone: (250) 477-8852