

Roncesvalles Zoning Review - Notes from April 19th Community Meeting

The meeting was held in St. Casimir's Church Parish Hall on April 19, 2012. The purpose of the meeting was to review the need for possible amendments to the existing R3 Zoning on the west side of Roncesvalles Avenue on those lands designated as Neighbourhoods. In the event there was a consensus on the need for such a review, the meeting was also intended to get feedback from the community on concerns which the community may have regarding the extent and nature of changes to the Zoning By-law.

Notes from the Question and Answer session summarize comments from the members of the public who attended and responses from staff and or the Councillor:

- Can the residents see copies of the various applications which have been made to the City for changes to the zoning By-law on the west side of Roncesvalles Ave.? City staff responded that the applications could be made available.
- Would the intention be to permit restaurants and/or bars through a Zoning amendment? Staff and the Councillor confirmed it was not their intention to introduced restaurants and/or bars through this process.
- Residents expressed support for maintaining the existing house form buildings on the west side of Roncesvalles Ave. They don't want to see typical commercial buildings replacing these structures.
- Future development on the west side of Roncesvalles Ave. should not mirror the existing development on the east side of the street.
- Specific reference was made to the west side of Roncesvalles Ave. between Hewitt Ave. and Boustead Ave. as a section of the street which successfully maintains house form buildings and more intense uses.
- There may be some support for changes to the By-law, but the existing built form should not be changed.
- Parking is an issue. There was a consensus that changes to the zoning should not increase demand for parking.
- If the By-law is reviewed but not amended, does the process of review itself help to support the By-law in the event it is challenged? Staff responded that if the By-law is not updated and there continue to be site-specific amendments to permit exceptions, the By-law will become more difficult to defend.
- Councillor Perks indicated that he wasn't interested in amending the By-law to permit restaurants or bars. The Councillor indicated his preference that

additional permissions be focused on small business which would support each other.

- There was a questions regarding if this process would create more large buildings on the west side of Roncesvalles. Staff responded that they look at multiple factors such as lot size, build form, street studies and so on. This process could include provisions for 0.6, height, and other issues the community would like to see.
- Some members of the public expressed support for no changes to the Zoning at all.
- A representative from the BIA spoke to the intent of the BIA not to take a position that would in any way pit them against the residents.
- In response to a question from the public, Councillor Perks confirmed that there would be no separate consultation process for the BIA or business on Roncesvalles Ave.
- A member of the public mentioned that the absence of a laneway network for the properties fronting the west side of Roncesvalles Ave. will limit the type of commercial uses that can operate on those properties.
- There was support for the idea of encouraging business investment but limiting additional permissions to those businesses that would contribute to the neighbourhood.
- Staff and the Councillors office committed to providing the minutes to the meeting.
- There was a concern raised the corner lots should have special consideration in any study to prevent 'creep' down side streets. Staff and the Councillor agreed this would be a good issue to address.
- In response to a question from the public, the Councillor confirmed that the "do nothing" scenario was still on the table, even in the event of a decision to review the By-law.
- Based on the desire to maintain the current built form on the west side of Roncesvalles Ave., it was proposed that provisions for density and height should be maintained.
- Councillor Perks confirmed that building elements, character and style cannot be regulated through a zoning By-law.

- The Councillor reiterated the position of Planning staff that undertaking a Heritage Conservation District designation, which could impose controls on building character and style, is a long process and not a quick fix.
- City Planning staff reiterated the position that an updated By-law which reflects the nature of business operating on the west side of Roncesvalles Ave. would be easier to defend.
- Traffic is very bad in the neighbourhood. We need to consider traffic impacts and the existing condition.
- There was support from the members of the public in attendance to the statement that the west side of Roncesvalles was unique and that changes to the Zoning By-law should not "destroy" the west side of the street.
- Any changes to the built form performance standards (height, setbacks, density, etc.) should be "tested" to ensure they will achieve the desired results. Planning staff explained that testing was a reference to the production of graphic images which would show what could be built based on these performance standards given lots sizes, frontages, etc.
- The question was asked whether a Church could be converted to residential uses under the By-law. Planning staff responded that such a conversion probably wouldn't be as-of-right, given the need to permit the number of units proposed.
- Planning staff were asked if they could make the presentation available to the public. Staff confirmed that this would be done.
- Councillor Perks described the process of reviewing the By-law as one which would involve the residents. Staff would report back to the community with some ideas as to how to amend the By-law and these would be presented to the community at a subsequent meeting in September. Proposals for changes to the By-law would be discussed
- There was support expressed for the planning process as described.
- Residents must be notified of any future meetings.
- The question was posed by the Councillor to residents as to their opinion on the desirability of undertaking a review of the zoning for the lands on the west side of Roncesvalles based upon the process as described above. A clear majority of those present expressed support for the undertaking the review.