



District of Maple Ridge News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 23, 2013 #13-04
For further information, call
Ernie Daykin or Jim Rule
at 604-463-5221
edaykin@mapleridge.ca

Maple Ridge Council Provides Background Information on Blaney Hamlet School Site in Silver Valley

Maple Ridge, BC : On January 7, 2013, Council received a staff report on property designated as a school site located in the Blaney Hamlet of Silver Valley. The staff report related to a development application that had been deferred by Council in April, 2012. Council moved the matter forward to the Council meeting for January 8, 2013, for further discussion.

At the Council meeting on January 8, 2013, Council passed a motion directing staff to prepare a proposed Zone Amending Bylaw for the property for consideration later in 2013, based on a November 15, 2012, letter from School District No. 42, stating that they “decided not to proceed with the purchase of the property.” Should Council move the application forward later in 2013, the normal public process, which includes a Public Hearing, will commence.

“After the January 8, 2013, Council meeting, residents of the Silver Valley neighbourhood developed a Facebook page and initiated an online petition relating to this matter. Council members have received a number of emails on the subject from Silver Valley residents. I have had the opportunity to meet with one of the petition organizers to review the information and to hear, first hand, what the concerns are from area residents,” said Mayor Ernie Daykin.

“Council wants to ensure that citizens are aware that the District of Maple Ridge is not responsible for purchasing property for school sites. This is the responsibility of the School District and/or the Provincial Government. Council has not yet approved any proposed change in the zoning of this property,” said Mayor Daykin. “As with all property zoning applications, we will follow the usual public process which includes a Public Hearing. There is some perception that the zoning change has already been made, and that’s simply not the case,” he explained.

Mayor Daykin continued, “I have asked staff to provide citizens with background information to help create a greater understanding of the roles of various levels of government and to clarify some of the timelines relating to this matter. As sometimes happens with matters that come

before Council, this matter has a much longer timeline than citizens may be aware of. I hope the following information will help citizens to better understand the circumstances that have brought this matter forward.”

Background Information on the Blaney Hamlet School Site in Silver Valley

The Official Community Plan and Designation of Lands

In the 1970s the Provincial Government passed legislation requiring each Municipality to develop an Official Community Plan (OCP) to set out the general pattern of development relating to residential, commercial, industrial and institutional property types such as parks and schools. The District of Maple Ridge adopted its first Official Community Plan (OCP) in 1981. The OCP was updated in 1989, 1996 and again in 2006. There has been extensive public consultation for each of the OCP updates.

The Silver Valley Area Plan

In 2000, the opportunity was identified to create a more detailed plan for the Silver Valley area. From 2000 to 2002, a series of workshops and meetings were held with residents, land owners and other stakeholders to develop this plan. School District No. 42 representatives were involved in the process. In October, 2002, the District of Maple Ridge adopted the Silver Valley Area Plan.

In 2006, School District No. 42 was invited to provide input on the overall Maple Ridge OCP review, which includes the existing Silver Valley Area Plan. No correspondence was received from School District No. 42 relating to the OCP review. The OCP update was adopted by Council in the Fall of 2006, and has successfully served as the template for the development of our community.

The Role of Municipal Government, the School District and the Provincial Government

As part of the development of the OCP, the Municipality, in consultation with the community and School District No. 42, identified sites to designate for future schools and parks in Maple Ridge. School District No. 42 and/or the Provincial Government are responsible for purchasing property designated for school sites. The District of Maple Ridge is responsible for acquiring property designated for parks.

The Planning Principles of Co-Locating Parks and Schools

The co-location of District of Maple Ridge parks beside schools helps create community gathering places and fosters strong neighbourhoods. In addition, these joint site developments offer great value and cost efficiencies for taxpayers.

There are many examples in the community of how this principle has been realized. The artificial turf fields at Westview and Samuel Robertson Schools are examples of how the District has been able to develop park facilities that are available widely to citizens in the evenings and weekends, while providing high quality spaces for students to both learn and participate in athletic programs and develop good habits of life-long fitness.

The Site Designated for a School in the Blaney Hamlet is Privately Owned

The site designated as a school in the Blaney Hamlet of the Silver Valley Area Plan is privately owned. The owners have held this property continuously since 1993. In 1996, the land was designated as a combination of Residential, School and Park.

The property owners have had ongoing discussions regarding the status of the land. Specifically, they have asked when School District No. 42 intended to purchase the land designated for the school. They also asked the District of Maple Ridge when the land designated for parks would be purchased from them.

In 2008, the property owners made a development application for their property. School District No. 42 and the Provincial Government were informed so they could begin the process to work on acquiring the land that is designated for a school.

The District of Maple Ridge has already purchased the majority of lands designated as park adjacent to the school designated site and is in the process of purchasing the remaining park designated land north of the school site in the Blaney Hamlet of Silver Valley.

The onus is on School District No.42 and/or the Provincial Government to purchase the land designated for the school site in the Blaney Hamlet as designated in the OCP.

Land Owner Development Application

Since 2008, the Municipality has been in discussions with School District No. 42 to facilitate the purchase of school sites in both the Silver Valley and Albion areas. It is important to note that the District of Maple Ridge offered to use its own borrowing capacity to assist with the acquisition of the designated School sites on the proviso that an agreement was in place for School District No. 42 to pay back the Municipality.

The acquisition of school sites is the responsibility of School District No. 42 and/or the Provincial Government. However, the Mayor, acting proactively, has participated in meetings with the Provincial Government to advocate for the acquisition of the designated school site in the Blaney Hamlet in Silver Valley.

In April, 2012, Council received a development application for the site in Blaney Hamlet. Council deferred the matter to allow School District No. 42 the opportunity to conclude its decision on the site purchase. On November 15, 2012, School District No. 42 sent a letter to District staff stating

that they “decided not to proceed with the purchase of the property” designated as a school site in the Blaney Hamlet.

The matter came before Council at the Committee of the Whole Meeting on January 7, 2013. The School District No. 42 Board Chair and Secretary Treasurer attended the Committee of the Whole meeting and answered questions from Council and reconfirmed that School District No. 42 no longer required the property.

On January 8, 2013, in light of the School District No. 42 decision ‘that they would not to proceed with the purchase of the property,’ Council passed a motion directing staff to prepare a proposed Zone Amending Bylaw for the property for consideration later in 2013.

As noted previously, the District of Maple Ridge has already purchased the majority of lands designated as park adjacent to the school designated site and is in the process of purchasing the remaining park designated land north of the school site in the Blaney Hamlet of Silver Valley.

All park lands are being purchased from private land owners. No land is being donated to the District of Maple Ridge from private land owners for either parks or schools in this site.

The complete agenda package including reports, minutes and the video recording of both the January 7, 2013, Committee of the Whole meeting and the January 8, 2013, Council Meeting are available on the District website at mapleridge.ca.

District of Maple Ridge staff will bring the proposed Zone Amending Bylaw back to Council for consideration later in 2013. Should Council move the application forward, a public process, which includes a Public Hearing, will commence.

