

PUBLIC HEARING REPORT
Monday, March 23, 2026 @ 6:00 PM
In the City Hall Council Chambers | 4850 Argyle Street, Port Alberni, BC

PRESENT: Mayor S. Minions (Chair)
Councillor D. Dame
Councillor D. Haggard
Councillor C. Mealey
Councillor C. Solda
Councillor T. Verbrugge

Regrets: Councillor T. Patola

Staff: A. McGifford, CAO
S. Darling, Director of Corporate Services
S. Smith, Director of Development Services/Deputy CAO
B. McLoughlin, Manager of Planning
K. Motiuk, Deputy Director of Corporate Services

Gallery: 20

CALL TO ORDER & APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

MOVED AND SECONDED, THAT the agenda be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

Chair Minions noted that the Public Hearing is held pursuant to sections 465 and 466 of the *Local Government Act*. Chair Minions then invited the Director of Corporate Services to provide a summary of the application.

1. Description of the Application:

The Director Corporate Services provided a summary of the application as follows:

- The applicant is seeking bylaw amendments that would enable development of 31 units of seniors housing at Tsawaayuus (Rainbow Gardens).

The proposed bylaws are:

- i. "Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw No. 5144".

If amended, this bylaw:

- Adds text to *Section D: Plan Policies, 3.1 Public Administration / Institutional* to support residential rental units and limited accessory services as part of a care facility on lands designated Institutional (INS); and
- Adds text to *Section D: Plan Policies, 4.0 Residential – Affordable Housing* to support the co-location of rental housing with care facilities on Institutional (INS) lands as part of a care facility campus.

ii. "Zoning Amendment (6123 and 6151 Russell Place) Bylaw No. 5119".

If amended, this bylaw:

- Adds text to *Section 5: Establishment of Zones* to create 'P3 Care Campus' as a new zone; and
- Changes the zoning bylaw map to rezone 6123 and 6151 Russell Place from 'P1 Institutional' to 'P3 Care Campus'.

2. **Background Information from the Development Services Department:**

The Manager of Planning provided background information regarding the proposed amendment by way of summarizing the report of March 16, 2026.

3. **Correspondence:**

- Email dated March 3, 2026 from J. Krog
- Email dated March 11, 2026 from D. Appleton, WHNCS President

4. **Late Correspondence Regarding the Matter:**

- Email dated March 19, 2026 from R. Terepocki
- Email dated March 20, 2026 from M. Cramner
- Email dated March 23, 2026 from D. Hunter
- Email dated March 23, 2026 from R. Williams
- Letter dated March 23, 2026 from L. Martin
- Letter dated March 23, 2026 from F. Bauder
- Letter dated March 23, 2026 from K. Edgar
- Letter dated March 23, 2026 from C. Augest
- Letter dated March 23, 2026 from F. Prest
- Letter dated March 23, 2026 from R. Williams

5. **Questions/Comments from Council:**

Inquired about delivery/service vehicles related to the site location and attendance at inappropriate times.

The Applicant replied on behalf of the developer that the location meets requirements and that waste services are managed by a private service provider, noting that there is the ability to change scheduled pick-ups if required.

Inquired about the interference and accessibility with the existing walkway.

The Applicant explained changes in the walkway and that they will ensure a loop walkway is provided, including access between the two buildings.

Inquired about future plans for additional buildings.

The Applicant shared that the requirement for outdoor amenities has been met, and that additional green space will be available in a corner area away from the intersection.

Noted reduction to two-stories to the building in the revised application.

6. Questions/Comments from Public:

The Applicant summarized changes to proposed structure:

- Three to two stories
- Rental units reduced by 4
- Traffic study completed; parking moved away from intersection
- Open space requirement increased

M. Lovesar

Expressed concerns about loss of greenspace, traffic speed in area, removal of playground structures. *Councillor Mealey will bring the issues forward to the Traffic Advisory Committee.*

D. Hunter

Expressed concerns that the revised proposal still does not address the concerns that led to the original rejection, particularly with respect to neighbourhood fit, traffic, parking, and evacuation risk. They also questioned the accuracy of the 2024 traffic study, requested updated analysis during the summer months, and stated that Westporte has already made sufficient compromises.

R. Williams

Expressed concerns that the proposal would negatively affect current tenants by reducing privacy, worsening existing traffic and parking challenges, and disrupting wheelchair access from Rainbow Gardens. They also raised concerns about construction impacts, servicing capacity for sewer and water, and the lack of park space.

M. Carter

Opposed the expansion, stating it would further block sightlines, increase construction noise and debris, and repeat impacts experienced during the previous development. Also raised concerns about the larger building footprint, limited reduction in units, lack of park and green space, and whether the revised application meets Council's intent for a meaningful reduction.

K. Edgar

Questioned the need for another similar building, noting that comparable recent developments in the community have already created challenges like those raised during the hearing. They also raised concerns about impacts on neighbouring seniors at Rainbow Gardens from children using nearby green space and asked for clarification on whether the proposed building would function like Rainbow Gardens or as a rental building.

Staff response: Staff advised that the proposed housing project consists of rental units intended for seniors. Staff further noted that the zoning and Official Community Plan amendments would permit the rental housing to be located with a care facility on the same site, which is why it is being described as a care campus.

G. Walerius

Raised concerns about whether the zoning would permit supportive housing, as well as limited parking on Russell Street due to existing constraints such as mailboxes, fire hydrants, and driveways. Also asked about evacuation access during a tsunami warning, advance notice and assessments for nearby residents before construction, and whether traffic management measures such as professional oversight and a flashing crossing light to River Road would be required.

Council spoke to emergency planning evacuation plans and congestion in specific areas of the emergency evacuation plans. *Councillor Mealey will bring the issues forward to the Traffic Advisory Committee.*

E. Bonny

Expressed concerns regarding lack of green space, speed of traffic in the area. *Councillor Mealey will bring the issues forward to the Traffic Advisory Committee.*

J. Cook

Stated that deliveries are limited to Rainbow Gardens and said speeding traffic on Russell Street is already a concern. Suggested that an additional exit road could help reduce congestion caused by drivers avoiding the Falls Street and River Road intersection and encouraged keeping an open mind about the proposal.

R. Fraser

Noted that this is the third development application for the property in ten years and that their understanding is that Westporte was established as a residential neighbourhood. Expressed concern that continued expansion must be carefully balanced, as feels the area was not designed to accommodate this level of growth.

R. Williams

Expressed concerns regarding access for emergency vehicles.

Council

Inquired about emergency vehicle access, and the process for ensuring access issues are addressed.

Staff response: Fire access will be reviewed during the Development Permit. PAFD will be involved in that process. The development will also be designed to meet BC Building Code and BC Fire Code.

Inquired about current existing parking stalls and proposed future stalls.

Staff response: 15 stalls in development application.

Inquired about parking stalls in use.

A. Van Volsen, Rainbow Gardens Resident Manager, explained parking stall use on the Rainbow Garden site.

Inquired about emergency evacuation plans.

A. Van Volsen shared that there is currently a fire safety plan proposed for the new development.

Inquired about waiting list and new applications for residency at Rainbow Gardens.

A. Van Volsen shared that there are 85 persons on a waiting list, 40 of which are in the last few months.

Inquired about low-income thresholds.

A. Van Volsen explained the economic model of the Rainbow Gardens complex.

Council

Inquired about funding for proposed build.

J. Jessup, Development Consultant addressed suspension of Community Housing funding from BC Housing, accessing federal funding and funding for Indigenous housing.

Council

Noted concerns about cigarette butt litter and other refuse from construction workers, and said that if the project proceeds, the applicant should work with the builder to provide a designated area and ensure regular clean-up to support good neighbour relations. Also stated that the previously agreed gazebo should be delivered.

7. Closing Remarks from the Chair:

Chair Minions reminded those present that once the Public Hearing has closed members of Council may not, as a group or as individuals, receive any further oral or written presentations on this matter including what might be perceived as informal discussions immediately after the termination of this meeting. She asked all parties to comply with this.

Before closing the Public Hearing, Chair Minions called three times for any further speakers on any of the matters contained in the proposed bylaw.

Chair Minions called the first time for input from the public.

Chair Minions called for a second time for input from the public.

K. Edgar

Inquired about homeless counts in the City.

Council shared information about the Housing Needs Assessment and the Point in Time Homeless count reports on the City website.

M. Lovesar

Spoke regarding damage to neighbouring homes from previous construction at Rainbow Gardens.

J. Carneghy

Expressed concerns regarding commercial traffic in the area, loss of green space in the area.

Chair Minions called for a third time for input from the public.

There being no further speakers, Chair Minions declared the Public Hearing closed.

8. Termination of the Public Hearing:

MOVED and SECONDED, THAT this Public Hearing terminate at 7:11 pm.

CARRIED



Sara Darling
Director of Corporate Services