

VARSITY CIVIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

July 7, 2023

Due to a shortage of space in the newsletter, this article will be a brief overview and the full Civic Affairs Report can be found on the Varsity Community Association website, www.vcacalgary.com.

Housing and Affordability Task Force Recommendations

In June Council adopted the recommendations of the Housing and Affordability Task Force. Everyone agrees that increasing housing affordability is very important but there is disagreement on the measures to achieve that. While many of the recommendations are reasonable and worthwhile, a number of community groups have expressed concern that there is a lack of evidence that some of the recommendations would result in greater affordability and that they constitute fundamental changes to planning processes in the city. These groups and City Council have agreed that they require consultation with the public. There are many recommendations but some of the ones causing concern include: Prepare the necessary bylaws to immediately make the base residential district R-CG (4-8 units per lot) with guidance for single, semi-detached, row and townhouses into a single land use district; Enable secondary suites and backyard suites on one parcel of land; Rescind the Single Detached Policy Area in the Guide to Local Area Planning immediately; Remove minimum parking requirements in all residential districts; Make dwelling units in all multi-residential land use districts Permitted Use to enable simplified approvals processes (no appeals); Make dwelling units in all multi-residential land use districts Permitted Use to enable simplified approvals; Advocate to the province to change the Municipal Government Act to allow affordable housing to be defined in a manner that exempts it from planning process requirements such as public hearings; Review all Joint Use and surplus school sites to determine if land is available for housing. If you have concerns about these recommendations you can write your councillor. Hopefully there will be more public engagement on the recommendations in the fall.

South Shaganappi Local Area Plan

The Local Area Plan will provide important future direction for planning and development in our community. More information can be found on the City's website at engage.calgary.ca/Shaganappi.

New Parking Permit Fees

The City has put the new fee structure for residential parking permits on hold temporarily. See the City of Calgary website for more details.

Enmax Transmission Line – 53 St & Varsity Est Drive – Request to Maintain Overhead Structures

Enmax has submitted an application to maintain on a permanent basis the current overhead transmission lines running through Varsity along 53 Street and Varsity Estates Drive. A number of residents and business have objected to the application and are requesting the lines be replaced in their original underground location. For more information, email stakeholderrelations@enmax.com, call 403-514-1471, or go to enmax.com/varsitynorthwest.

Playground Review Subcommittee

Varsity is fortunate to have some great playgrounds, however, a few are in need of updating. If you are interested in serving on a playground subcommittee or would like to bring any existing problems with playgrounds to our attention, please email me. The first meeting of this group will be held in September.

Concerns about Nearby Development?

If you have concerns about development that is proposed near to you, feel free to email me to discuss. We can review the development with you and advise you on the proper procedures to appeal if required.

University Innovation Quarter (formerly University Research Park)

The University Innovation Quarter is a 76 acre site north of 32 Avenue, south of Crowchild Trail, and east of 37 Street. There is a Master Plan to modernize the lands and increase density which will include a combination of commercial, retail, and residential development. Go to uiqcalgary.com to view the plans and for more information. The STEM Innovation Academy, a public charter school, opens this fall and we anticipate applications for more charter schools in the SMART Building.

For information regarding the Civic Affairs Committee, please contact JoAnne Atkins, Director of Civic Affairs, at joanneatkins@shaw.ca.