

**Meeting minutes of the Rio Terrace Community League Board
March 23, 2016
Rio Terrace Community League Hall**

Present: Lance Burns, Aman Athwal, Dan Mallett, Tony Andrzejewski, Councilor Michael Oshry (City of Edmonton), Lisa McColl (City of Edmonton), Erin Waye, Gary Burton, Emma Woolner, Peter Wong, Auriana Burns, Catherine Darrah (Preschool Chair), James Lavoy, David Feldman, Dawna-Lynne Duffy Power, Jessica Natrass (recording).

Mary Sturgeon, Rory Waye, Trent Bjorndahl, Mary Knight, Thomas Braun, Jane Sokalski, Sherry Waroway, Susan Thompson, Rod Thompson, Dianne Johnson, Wayne Oakes, Gary Elliott, Yves Forté, Michele Foley, Ingrid Lundell, Connie Baxter, Robert Lundell, Gordon Fuerst, Joyce Fuerst, Howard Johnes, David Jolly, Nafisa Bowen.

Call to Order: 7:09p.m

1) Approval of Meeting Minutes for February, 2016

- Motion to approve the minutes by Tony, seconded by Emma, carried.

2) Approval of Agenda

- Motion to approve the agenda by David, seconded by D-L, carried.

3) Appointment of Treasurer and Financial Report

MOTION by Tony Andrzejewski

I move to appoint Dan Mallet as Treasurer until the term for this position ends at the next Annual General Meeting.

Seconded by Auriana, carried.

Dan circulated his financial report. (See Appendix 1) Over the past month mostly generic revenue came in and the expenses were primarily related to maintenance. Cash available is \$230,985.40.

Gary asked Dan to provide him with an itemized list of of maintenance expenses.

MOTION by Dan Mallet

I move that the financial report be accepted as information.

Seconded by Gary, carried.

Aman Athwal left the meeting.

4) Infill Discussion

Lance introduced our councilor, Michael Oshry, and gave him the floor.

The City of Edmonton has changed their guidelines on infill and subdivision. The bylaw that was recently approved was for the splitting of 50ft lots. The bylaw to split bigger lots (such as in Rio Terrace) has actually been in place since 1980.

The reason for the bylaw changes is to encourage new builds in existing neighbourhoods. The costs to support the development of new neighbourhoods in the suburbs is high and the mature neighbourhoods are seeing a decline in population and school utilization.

The bylaws apply evenly to all neighbourhoods. The City cannot pick and choose. There has only been one infill property in Rio Terrace in the last 10 years, compared to the 19,000 infill properties in the rest of the City.

A question and answer period took place.

Question: Does the City have any control of the architectural design of the infill properties?

Answer: The City can only zone the land and approve the application based on the maximum height, front and rear setback requirements.

Question: How does it make sense that so many communities oppose infill when it is supposed to be a positive thing for our city?

Answer: Council has to make decisions that are best for the City and not based upon the opinions of some people within some neighbourhoods. Densifying mature neighbourhoods is one tool that is needed to control the City's costs and taxes.

Question: For the infills that have been completed, what has been the impact on property values and the social acceptance of the people who initially opposed these projects?

Answer: Studies have shown that statistically lot values increase when infill properties are constructed. This is because people value smaller lots when the trade off is modern style homes that are close to the core of the City. The new houses often exceed the value of what was initially a poorly maintained property.

Question: Please explain your comment in the recent news about Rio Terrace's population stagnating when we have just added 15 new lots and our schools are at capacity.

Answer: The data shows that Rio Terrace School is at 74% utilization and that the province evaluates schools for closure when they are under 85%. The overall population has also decreased in Rio as many households now only have a couple or single person compared to the past studies. In the new neighbourhoods the majority of single-family homes have growing families. Even if infill weren't taking place, the replacement of families into older homes would have less people than in the past. City administration has projected that Rio Terrace will experience a slow uptake of infill development vs. planned community developments like Blatchford.

Question: How will lot subdivision affect parking? Our neighbourhood has no back lanes.

Answer: Once a lot is split, the property still needs to abide by the same rules as a single home so there will be a double garage constructed. Traffic studies show that Rio Terrace has no traffic currently and the increased amount of traffic from visitor parking to these properties will be negligible.

Question: How does this kind of infill provide more affordable housing in the core?

Answer: This type of project is not about affordable housing. That will be achieved by higher density housing (condos, townhouses). This type of infill is designed to increase density.

Question: Won't this affect overall traffic into our neighbourhood, as there are only two entry points that cannot accommodate increased volume?

Answer: Traffic studies have been done and show that there is little to no traffic in Rio Terrace. Eventually, if many lots were subdivided and many families moved in, there could be an issue with increased on street parking. Residents, however, do not own the parking space directly outside their house.

Question: Why haven't there been more higher density projects like the Rio Terrace apartments if the City is interested in increasing populations?

Answer: The City would welcome kind of development and is also looking into this; it is not solely focused on lot splitting.

Question: Won't parking cause friction amongst neighbours? How does a 26ft garage fit within the setback guidelines?

Answer: Most lots in Rio are bigger. The subdivision being proposed at 155 street is a 75ft lot. I am unsure on how it would work for small lots (50 ft.)

