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Vernon Re/Max

Opinions conflict over waterfront plan

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Vernon's waterfront plan is making waves.

Horst Buchele Kevin Wendland

About 50 people attended a public hearing Monday to debate two proposed bylaws relating to the tourist commercial waterfront plan. Opinions were divided as some favoured the city's goals while others were opposed.

Large (12.7 MB) Medium (4.3 MB) Small (2.2 MB)

"It's so bad you should throw everything out and start over," said Don Defeo, a Vernon realtor.

"We've been four years at it and where are the tourists and the commercial? Let's be honest and call it a residential area."

Defeo told council that the price of real estate precludes small businesses, such as cafes, from moving to the waterfront.

However, others praised the city for its vision.

"This plan looks really awesome. Let's invite the developers to build something," said Bruce Stobee.

The public hearing specifically dealt with a bylaw that would see the former



North Westside North Okanagan Coldstream Community Futures WRS Society

Lakers Golf clubhouse on Cummins Road designated from residential and parks to tourist commercial.

Another bylaw would see zoning shift from parks to tourist commercial and four-plex residential.

The city owns the Lakers building and hopes to move the Elks Lodge there as part of a land swap.

But many residents are concerned about traffic and noise.

"We're so frustrated because this is the third time we've been here. I hope you hear us," resident Kevin Lepp told council.

But while the hearing dealt specifically with the Lakers site, discussion continued about the waterfront plan.

"We need a place to go for a Starbucks or an ice cream," said Joel Ellams.

Some speakers spoke about the merits of Kelowna's waterfront, but that didn't go over well with Diana Bainbridge, who wants wetlands preserved.

"If you like what Kelowna and Penticton have chosen, you can move there," she said.

Some at the hearing were concerned to see publicly owned lots on Okanagan Lake identified for tourist commercial uses on city maps.

"Why would we buy these properties and give them up for developers," said Bill Wagner.

Council will now consider the comments from the public hearing before making any further decisions on the bylaws.

"The intent is to find a plan that is hopefully workable for everybody," said Mayor Wayne Lippert.



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