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# Standards sought for affordable units

**Advisory planning commission says without clear guidelines from city, it's likely to turn down all applications for 'density bumps'**

By J.P. SQUIRE  
The Daily Courier

Kelowna's advisory planning commission is threatening to turn down all applications for higher-density housing unless city council sets clear standards for affordable housing.

The APC debate on Tuesday night echoed a similar discussion at city council Monday.

The spark Tuesday was an application by Allaire Properties for 65 three-bedroom townhouses on six properties at Lakeshore and Sherwood roads in Okanagan Mission. Its application was tabled by the commission, pending a council decision.

The problem is the city lacks a formal policy on so-called density bumps - authorization to build more suites than would normally be allowed. City planners have encouraged developers to designate half of the extra units for affordable housing.

However, instead of designating any of the 1,300-square-foot units as affordable, company owner

Mark Allaire has offered the city a cash-in-lieu payment of \$32,500, about \$500 a unit.

He told commission members it isn't viable to make a 1,300-square-foot unit affordable under the city's affordable housing guidelines.

"Isn't that a joke?" said commission member Barry Braden, while member John Welder described the \$32,500 as "a bit of a farce."

Braden estimated Allaire would get as many as 20 additional units as a result of the density bump, which should mean 10 affordable housing units.

Welder noted a Rutland developer earlier agreed to provide six units of affordable housing out of 38 total, so Allaire should provide as many as 12.

"The \$32,500 is nowhere close to 12 units," he commented.

"In certain areas, developers accommodate affordable housing. In other areas, they don't. I have a problem with that," added commission member Bill Wostradowski.

Commission member Don McConachie suggested that unless city council comes up with a policy, the APC will turn down all applications for density bumps. He admitted: "There's going to be some static" if the commission follows through with that.

On Monday, council approved a housing agreement with Witmar Developments Ltd., despite mis-

givings about accepting 12 affordable housing suites out of 224 total.

The firm offered 12 single-bedroom units even though the KLO Road development consists of a mix of suite sizes.

It has become common for builders to offer bachelor and one-bedroom suites rather than the more expensive two- or three-bedroom units.

The owners of a new condominium building approved for the Ambrosi/Barlee area, for example, received a density bump to build a 72-unit complex with only three one-bedroom suites designated as affordable housing, and none of the 64 two-bedroom units.

The dilemma facing council was whether to press for a mix of suites and risk having the developer abandon the affordable housing agreement and reduce the total number of units in the building to comply with the city's zoning bylaw.

Council is likely to soon adopt a new policy requiring that not only half of the additional units be designated as affordable housing, but that half of the additional living area go toward affordable suites.

"Hopefully, that new policy will come forward before the end of the year," Mayor Sharon Shepherd said.