

# Third St. residents angry about medical clinic

Debra Martin

debra.martin@comoxvalleyrecord.com

Third Street residents aren't happy about a proposed new medical clinic on their street.

Numerous residents came out to a public hearing Monday night to voice objections to a zoning text amendment change that would see an existing medical building replaced with a new one.

The problem, though, is that the existing medical building has been a non-conforming use in its zone for more than 20 years.

The proposed text amendment would see the City add medical clinic to the list of permitted uses under Commercial Five zoning. And the City will require the three lots involved to be consolidated into one.

Residents were primarily concerned about traffic issues, fearing that the new clinic, with chiropractic and family medicine services, would worsen an already bad situation in their eyes.

Diana Schroeder told council that "traffic destroys neighbourhoods."

She said it seemed foolish to eliminate the possibility of having three small residential lots. The C-5 zone is unique to the



Designer's rendering of what a proposed new medical clinic will look like viewed from Third St. in Courtenay.

Old Orchard neighbourhood, she said, and its purpose was to keep traffic to a minimum by allowing for small, home-based businesses.

"A medical building in the Old Orchard is unnecessary," she said.

Third St. resident Steve Schoenhoff said "generally we thought it was a nice building" but there was no discussion about traffic at a public information meeting held by the applicant.

"In order for us to protect our neighbourhood we have to protect ourselves from traffic," he said.

Resident Alana Check said heavy traffic, combined with the transit buses using Third, is already affecting the neigh-

bourhood. She said the street already gets filled by downtown workers parking there.

Rick Sheldon told council that Third St. is the only one in the city that doesn't have a stop sign or traffic control device.

"Traffic flies right through ... and now you want to put another 60-80 vehicles a day up Third? The speeding is ridiculous," he said. "We're a residential area. You'd never know it ... and now you're just adding to the problems."

Chester Check said the City was "screwing the area up" and

suggested they rename Third St. to Autobahn.

But applicant Dr. Debbie Wright said the property has never been residential. She was looking for a spot to relocate her Fourth St. chiropractic clinic, and add a family doctor practice with the goal of offering "intra-professional care".

She said a previous tenant was the Valley's only ear, nose and throat specialist, which probably generated more traffic than her clinic would.

And she noted that much of the parking lot was rented out to nearby businesses, and

not really monitored. "When I am able to use that as my personal lot for my office, there won't be traffic coming and going from that lot. That's also something to consider," she said.

Dr. Wright said she was never asked by the City to conduct a traffic study.

City council will make a decision on the zoning text amendment at its next regular meeting June 12.