

**Delegation before Regular Meeting of Council
November 13, 2017, 6:30 pm**

Agenda Item 10.2.c

Report PB-62-17, Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment for 421 – 431 Brant Street

Good evening. Thank you for this opportunity to address Council. My name is Deedee Davies. Although you know me as Chair of the citizen group, Burlington Waterfront, I am delegating today as a private citizen.

I attended the Planning and Development Committee Meeting on November 1st and did not delegate. I wanted to learn why Staff were recommending approval of the developer's application with only minor amendments, as it was not clear from the Staff Report. I was not satisfied with what I learned so I am delegating tonight.

Our City Hall is the most important building in our downtown. The value of this icon that represents the hopes and dreams for democracy and good governance for all residents of Burlington seems to have been undervalued in planning for the Brant Street Precinct Special Policy Area. It was expressed by Councillors that should the applicant's highrise be approved, a second building of similar stature would be built to mirror it on the SE corner of James and Brant. Our City Hall would all but disappear when compared to these two highrises. I was surprised to hear Councillor Lancaster state that "this highrise will create a space where we can feel important". I can't imagine how a highrise, that will become only one of a very many highrises in the core could add to any feeling of importance. My perception is that it would diminish the pedestrians in our so called 'walkable' city.

Staff and Council regularly speak about these kind of highrise buildings bringing vibrancy to the downtown. A condo cannot bring vibrancy to the downtown. There must be something for the condo residents to do along the streets that brings vibrancy to the downtown. This development will be reducing the amount of office and commercial space from what is currently available. How can this add to the vibrancy? We need more office and a greater mix of commercial spaces that will keep the residents in the downtown.

During the two years or so that would be required to construct this highrise, what happens to the businesses that currently operate there? When Looney Tunes leaves and sets up shop somewhere else, what would bring it back to Brant Street? Do we honestly expect that the new commercial space will be more affordable because the building is bigger than what is there now?

And when the twin building is built across the street, do we think that Kelly's Bakeshop will come back after 2 years of re-establishing itself elsewhere? Kelly's is a destination store that brings shoppers from across the city and other cities to the downtown. Likewise, when the next highrise is built, will Joelle's and Jeff's Guy Shop, again, destination stores, come back after they are booted out of their location? I think not.

To bring vibrancy to the downtown, we need a mix of people to live here that can patronize the commercial occupants. The applicant is not promising a good mix of residents. Ed Fothergill, the applicant's planner stated it would attract people like him. I don't know his age, but I would guess he is older than me, and I am a retiree. Is this how we animate the downtown of Burlington?

To bring vibrancy to the downtown, we need a mix of economic classes mingling. It was stated that there were no affordable units planned for this highrise. However, the City could use some of its Section 37 credits to obtain affordable units. This is a game that developers play. They know what the city wants and they make you trade for what should already be included in every building that receives approval, prior to Section 37 being negotiated. In this game, the city and its residents lose.

Our Mayor acknowledged we need some height for cost-affordable housing. I suggest to you that given how staff and Councillors have described this corner as being such an important location the price of the units will match the so-called importance of this location. Councillor Sharman even stated that “affordability in Burlington is meaningless as our city is expensive”. When I heard this I felt like he had given up working towards a city where more than the wealthy can live in the downtown. These units will not be affordable, unless the Region buys them and adds them to its inventory of affordable housing.

Staff are willing to trade height for a two storey triangle cut out of the podium at the corner. I don’t think this is a fair trade. We may get a couple benches and a piece of art on a concrete corner. You can’t put in gardens or trees because there is a building over-top the space. The Mayor’s Millennial Advisory Group stated that green space in the downtown needs to be green, not concrete.

For these and so many other reasons I don’t have time to mention, I am asking you to listen to what the residents of Burlington want for their downtown and to turn down this application as it is presented and to not approve the Official Plan and By-law amendments requested.

Thank you for your time.

Deedee Davies

