
Subject: Issues arising from June 11 P&D meeting Statutory Meeting on 53-71 Plains Rd. E. (Solid Gold)

70 Townsend Ave.,

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June 18, 2018

To: Burlington City Council'

From: Tom Muir, Resident.

Subject: Issues arising from June 11 P&D meeting Statutory Meeting on 53-71 Plains Rd. E. (Solid Gold)

Dear Councilors,

As you know I delegated to the June 11 P&D meeting on this subject. I will not delegate personally to this City Council meeting, but wish to submit this short written delegation on certain selected issues that arose from the P&D meeting, specifically during the post public meeting Council questions to staff, and discussion, for the record and Minutes of these proceedings.

With respect to this application, I have submitted a significant number of comments and concerns. Specific concerns at issue here, relate to variances asking for reduced parking, and the issues related to encroachment on nearby low density established neighborhoods due to other variances related to;

- Increased height (10 and 12 story)
- Increased density
- Reduce minimum set backs
- Reduce amenity area
- Reduce parking standards
- Reduced landscaping/green space

My concerns here arise from the comments made by one women staff member, who was not identified at the meeting itself by the Director of Planning, nor was she identified in the Minutes. She sat in the public gallery during the public meeting and staff introductions, and only came to the oval when questions were directed to her. So I don't know her name, professional capacity, or what Dept she works for, although I would guess it is Transportation.

To get to the point, I was disturbed by several comments she made regarding parking standards, and encroachments onto and into the Clearview and associated neighborhood due to the application, if approved, and the general direction of intensification in the area, as apparently seen by her, and I would infer, by the Transportation Dept as a whole.

In short, I was disturbed by her remarks about a new lower parking standard that better fits the application in parking need, and the telegraphing of this information to the developer during the meeting.

It was suggested that the parking asked for in the application will no longer be a problem for the application, as the parking standard is being redefined and reduced by a suitable amount, for unexplained reasons.

This creates an impression that the building height and massing, and unit number, no longer creates a parking problem, which suggests that said built form is acceptable. I also got the impression that these revised standards have been discussed with the developer for a revised application. This revision has not been made public.

This did not escape other participants at the meeting, or who viewed the meeting video later.

It is particularly problematic, because a revised parking standard study, and specific recommendations proposed, is not a well known entity (not known to me) and has not been publicly presented, vetted, discussed, and through due process, properly approved by Council.

The staff report to the meeting did not mention a new parking standard, just the existing by-law, and the several problems and shortcomings presented by the reduced standard variances asked for.

My own written comments have considered this closely, and my verbal delegation mentioned it, but more briefly than what I wrote, for the reason that I was not aware that there is a new standard, and it would be put on the table after public delegations.

There are other issues that arose from other remarks made by this staff member, and these are related to the parking issue, possible overflow parking in the neighborhoods nearby, and resulting significant traffic induced by the proposed scale of the build.

In response to Councilor questions and discussion about the number of cars and traffic proposed at 600, the staffer was already suggesting that Clearview, and into the nearby neighborhood, would need to have sidewalks installed, and this would involve changing the rural neighborhood character swales as natural storm drainage, to urban curb and gutter and pipes.

I was further aghast that she said it was not a safety issue, not about kids and residents who have lived in this rural area with little traffic forever, but that she or they wants to encourage multi-modal movement by residents. I was also struck by the abstract conceptual language description of the multi-modal "lenses" being used to rationalize all this.

There were a number of these residents at the meeting, so how do you think they felt about this coming to their neighborhood? Surprised? Threatened and stressed? Like they don't move around okay now without traffic congestion and sidewalks?

This clearly suggests what the planning and transportation thinking has in mind and in store for these residents. It appears that no matter the public face put on this, and what they are told, the reality is hiding in plain sight. It looks like this is what you are going to get from those that deliver it.

This is just not right. Even just an impression is not right.

Isn't it Council that decides if these standards, and related matters, are acceptable, subject to due process, with public debate?

Why are staff sounding like this is a done deal that can enter negotiations right now?

In conclusion, I must say, however, that several Councilors expressed serious concerns, asked many excellent questions about the staff report content and accuracy, why the application can't live within the standards and applicable by-laws, empathized with residents and their rural neighborhood, questioned sidewalk and sewers, were concerned about induced traffic, and there were other things.

They did not always get answers, which I found to be strange in some instances.

Nonetheless, in my experience, it was a brighter moment for Council that I hope prevails.

It is worth watching the video of the meeting or just parts.

Thank you,

Tom Muir

