

Delegation to City Council
Monday October 28, 2019
Re: File No. PD-09-19

I was told it would be helpful if I submitted another delegation about the Planning Process Review. I am running out of things to talk and write about because I don't know how many different ways I can send the same message.

Over the last 4 1/2 years, I have spoken to or emailed various staff from Capital Works, Planning & Building Departments, members of Roads, Parks & Forestry, and previous and current Councils & Mayors. I have scoured the City website, phoned and visited City Hall numerous times to gather information and educate myself on by-laws, zoning restrictions, etc. I have delegated before the Committee of Adjustment and before all of you, answered surveys, attended a Citizen Action Lab, provided feedback when requested, and enlisted my community's support for important issues affecting our neighbourhood, including a petition to oppose the variances & proposed size of a massive house - which looks like it's going to get built anyway. I have done what my City has asked me to do as an engaged citizen, to the very best of my ability and availability. In turn, I've invited members of City staff to come to my home and see what I - and others - have experienced for the last few years and will experience again for the next year (or longer). I have also asked if someone is willing to be held accountable if I have problems when the monster house gets built next to me. No one has ever acknowledged those last 2 questions. They were not rhetorical. And yet here I am again, this time with the expectation that our family is about to have the enjoyment of our home and neighbourhood upended once more.

One of the objectives of the Character Area designation is *"to maintain, protect, and enhance neighbourhood character by ensuring that development and re-development within Neighbourhood Character Areas is compatible with and respectful of the neighbourhood character"*. Under the General Policies section, Item 2.d) states: *"Proposed development should respect the existing character by incorporating built form and design elements, architectural features, building separations, lot coverage, scale, floor area ratio and landscape qualities that are prevalent in the Neighbourhood Character Area"*. Interestingly, there is a section of the Official Plan that includes a subclause stating *"within Neighbourhood Character Areas, the proposed development shall achieve consistency with neighbourhood character"*.

So my question to Council is: **Should** development be compatible or **shall** it be compatible? In my delegation of Oct 8 on the Planning Process Review, Councillor Kearns asked what could have been done better on the Shoreacres Character Study. The aforementioned two words might seem to have a minor difference but use of them has major consequences. Let's replace any instances of the word **"should"** to **"shall"**. I also previously mentioned there was conversation around appropriate FAR. Because our neighbourhood contains some uniquely sized lots, current by-laws allow for excessively large houses. Please re-visit FAR and consider including a provision that would call for a maximum on what someone can build.

I appreciate Council's current efforts towards including those who are most impacted by development, in the Planning Process.

But I don't want to keep delegating. I don't want to keep coming up with suggestions for policies and procedures. I don't have education or expertise in this field, and I am not paid for my time or research. Other area residents have invested much more time than I have, and can better speak on some policies and the specifics of the Character Study. However even despite all their hard work, they have subsequently experienced the very challenges they worked so hard to prevent. But we will continue to stay engaged.

I recall my comments to members of our Planning Department at the presentation of the final version of our Character Study: "So, regardless of all these guidelines, someone can still build a really big house?". The answer was "yes". And, of course, that's what we've seen happen. So this time, will the time and effort and money that we are investing in public engagement be worth it? Because we have yet to see the benefit from the last round.

Please, impose a moratorium on any new building applications while better planning procedures are sorted out. Please expand the distribution range for building & variance notices in our area. Please help improve the ease and flow of communication between city, builder and area residents when new construction is taking place. Please do not spend excessive time on due process. Please take the concerns of your constituents to heart before our neighbourhood character is non-existent. Recent development is driving out the individuals who have helped shape our community into what it is.

Respectfully,
Leslie Barbetta