

Jeremy Skinner Delegation

16 Jan 2020 – Community Planning, Regulation and Mobility Committee Meeting

Taking a Closer Look at the Downtown

Your worship, Mayor Marianne Meed-Ward

Elected members of City Council

City Staff

Representatives of the consulting firm SGL Planning & Design

Representatives of the City of Burlington developers, property owners, business owners and residents

My name is Jeremy Skinner

I am a 4-year resident of Burlington living in Ward 5.

I have an interest in Urban Planning, especially as it pertains to developments which border stable residential neighbourhoods.

I apologize for not submitting my delegation prior to yesterday's deadline. I have since sent a softcopy to the City Clerk.

First, of all I wish to thank all of you who have participated in some or all the steps of this process.

Second, I wish to recognize that our efforts have been timeboxed to permit amendments to the new Official Plan for building application submissions post-Interim Control By Law.

Third, our proposed policy changes must be able to be defended should any be appealed to a higher level of authority having jurisdiction.

Fourth, our proposed policy changes must be respectful of investments already made in terms of stable businesses and residences.

1. Suggestion: Enhance the text in the Introduction of the OP by declaring that the governance of Land-Use Development Planning as defined in the Planning Act is based upon contention between interested parties: principally those representing the interests of the Province; the Region; the City; the people; and the party seeking change which is typically a property developer.
 - a. The Planning act seeks to enshrine a framework modeled after the legal framework whereby the best argument is used to resolve disputes amongst the interested parties. Such a framework has been proven to be one of the best ways to overcome the difficulties associated unforeseen future consequences of adopting any policies. The framework also promotes the need for negotiations between affected parties to come up with a mutually agreeable compromise, or failing that, well defined list of unresolved concerns with which to seek an appeal decision from a higher authority of jurisdiction.
 - b. The reader must come to the realization as to the reasons why the text of the Official Plan is not and must not be considered as “cast in stone”.
 - c. Instead the Planning Act dictates that the Official Plan and related Zoning By-laws must accommodate the possibility of an amendment based upon following a prescribed process by City Council or in response to receipt of an Order from a higher authority having jurisdiction including those of the Region of Halton, the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal or the Provincial Minister of Municipal & Urban Affairs and Housing.
2. Suggestion: Ensure that proposed development transitions with bordering stable residential neighbourhoods are not compromised by any development application proposed amendment to the Official Plan and/or Zoning By-Law amendments unless dictated by an Order from a higher level of jurisdiction having authority. Should such an Order be issued, the City has an obligation to seek appeal or compensation on behalf of the affected residential property owners.
3. Suggestion: Ensure that the developers understand that they should seriously consider the costs of acquiring or compensating bordering residential properties in those cases where their proposed development cannot satisfy compatible transitions to bordering stable residential neighbourhoods at the pleasure of the residential property owner.
4. Suggestion: To resolve the ambiguity as to the City’s progress of meeting Region and Provincial density targets, I suggest that the City consider the development and maintenance of an annual report destined to the Region and the Minister for Municipal & Urban Affairs and Housing outlining
 - a. a summary of development application submitted within the year, in-flight from prior year’s submission, and approved including the developer, the precinct, provisioned jobs/residents complete with dates, and durations and building type.
 - b. the number of appeals by developer, precinct, reason for appeal and decision rendered.
 - c. identification of requirements for process improvements and/or to accommodate the Region, and Ministry density targets.

The same report could be submitted as evidence of City compliance to each relevant LPAT case to remove the ambiguity that the Member may face prior to rendering a decision. The City is also encouraged to collaborate with sister Municipalities for a consistent response to the Ministry.

5. Suggestion: Assess whether the current fine-grained grid street network be maintained for through vehicular traffic or whether some streets be repurposed such as pedestrian walkways and public open spaces.
 - a. Alternatively, consider whether street segments could be leased or sold to permit land assembly for a more efficient built form.
 - b. Vehicular access for building servicing would be restricted to after hours access except in the event of an emergency.
6. Suggestion: City enhance the definition of a Complete Community in terms of availability of a common goods and services which could be applied to each precinct or neighbourhood which exist within or in a bordering Community.
 - a. An illustration: The Real Estate community has settled on the use of the “Walkability Score” for the Community.
 - b. Perhaps, the Burlington Economic Development agency should be engaged to assist in developing what the Complete Community criteria should be and to perform a gap-analysis as to what is required to achieve a Complete Community starting with each Downtown Precinct.
 - c. Such a Complete Community assessment should be provided to the developer prior to or at the time of development application.
 - d. This same effort could be validated by understanding how the press ranks the City of Burlington with other Municipalities in terms of livability etc.
 - e. Demographics also need to be considered to identify the priority of need for each good and service.
7. Suggestion: Invest in an “Inspire Burlington” public meeting on the definition of what comprises a Complete Community in terms of desired goods and services and how the changing demographics for these same Communities will alter the priority of their needs.

Thank you.

I will entertain any questions on my delegation.

Thank you.