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Victoria, B.C., Canada

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October 15th, 2017

Mayor and Council,
City of Victoria

Re: 71-75 Montreal – proposal for a multi-unit dwelling replacing R-2 housing

Dear Mayor and Councilors,

The proposal for a multi-unit residential complex at 71-75 Montreal was last heard at a JBNA Community Meeting on May 10, 2017. There were over 70 people in attendance during the discussion of this proposal.

It should be noted that the current proposal, being considered by Council, has not been taken to a CALUC Community Meeting. For this reason, the JBNA DRC and/or Board has not offered a comment on the current proposal.

Prior to the May 10th JBNA Community Meeting, during our pre-meetings(s), the proponent had committed to providing several items for the community meeting, namely:

- One page (double-sided) description of the project providing a schematic and information such as set-backs, heights; 40-50 copies required for distribution at meeting
- Shadow study
- Parking study (on a typical summer/fall sporting event day at McDonald Park)

It should be noted that these items are routinely requested, and supplied by proponents. Over the years, JBNA has attempted to facilitate Community Meeting presentations by identifying resident information needs during pre-meetings. The one-page handout is common to all proposals as we have found that the community discussion becomes more focused when some of the information and a schematic are in hand during the meeting. Other requests are made when the JBNA Development Review Committee (DRC) foresees resident questions relating to either shadowing or parking. This process is used for small rezonings such as the placement of washroom facilities in a garage, to large proposals such as the more recent Harbour Towers redevelopment.

This JBNA DRC process has been in place for over 10 years and has provided the development community with “known” information requirements and resulted in timely response to requests for meetings.

On May 10th, 71-75 Montreal was the third development proposal during the meeting. With people coming and going, it was not realized until part way through the presentation and Q/A session that the proponent had failed to fulfill the support documentation in the form of the 3 information commitments above.

On May 18th, the JBNA Board wrote to the proponent, stating that we wished to complete the file and ensure that the community has full information. To facilitate the review process, the Proponent was invited to present the materials at either the June 14th or July 12th Community Meeting. We also offered to convene a meeting within a few days if he wished to discuss further. The proponent did not respond.

We have recently been informed that the proposal will be going to Committee of the Whole in the near future. Attached please find the excerpt of the minutes from the May 10th meeting. Appended to the attachment is a letter of objection from a nearby resident

- The proposal was not well received by most nearby residents. Issues focused on:
- Parking (addressed in current proposal not reviewed by community),
 - Increase in density,
 - Precedent of creating many more units for two R2 lot. (over the iterations, the proposal was often compared to the 4-plex on St Lawrence which was a development on two R2 lots, and
 - The change in the streetscape along south side of Niagara (set-back).

There were a few residents who appreciated the proposal as it would put more residential units on the Market.

In general, the design was considered appealing, with concerns focused on density at this location, the loss of more traditional housing, and the commitment of the OCP, and the absence of rationale for the zoning up-grade (financial gain for developer), especially without the creation of affordable housing.

For your consideration,



Marg Gardiner
President, JBNA

Cc: JBNA Board, Miko Betanzo, Planning
Leonard Cole, proponent

Attach: Excerpt from May 10th, 2017, JBNA General Meeting

ATTACHMENT: Excerpt: May 10th, 2017, JBNA General Meeting Minutes

8. Design CALUC: 71-75 Montreal (about 70 people in attendance)

Development Review Committee (DRC) Meeting: presented by Tim VanAlstine

This proposal follows an earlier proposal considered at the May 11, 2016, JBNA General Meeting. There were 2 pre-meetings associated with the earlier proposal, on October 1, 2015 and on March 21, 2016. Major issues raised at that time were major parking deficiency, lack of green space, density, size of units given the expectation of, and need for family housing in close proximity to the school. The proponent also held a community open house on October 27, 2015.

At Council's Committee of the Whole, the proponent was asked to rethink the project with an eye to larger units, and to go back to the community with a second CALUC meeting.

On April 17, 2017, JBNA DRC Committee members Tim VanAlstine, Marg Gardiner, Linda Carlson, Tim Sommers and Janice Mayfield met with Peter deHoog, Architect, and Leonard Cole, Developer, to review the proposed project.

The proposal for the two **R-2 zoned** lots has remained similar in appearance, size and footprint, with the number of units being reduced from 24 to 21 to 19 and now 14 units, ranging from small studio to 3-bedroom strata apartments. 11 parking stalls are proposed.

Two storey plus building with wood framing; no sprinkler system required, and no special seismic considerations required. Developer states if he can't do this build, he will put in 4 additional housekeeping units per building and develop at a later date.

Anticipated Community concerns were identified:

- Possible shadow impact on housing on the north side of Niagara (shadow study requested).
- Lack of setbacks/green space. Not suitable for residential area-more suitable for downtown.
- Lack of light in subterranean units.
- Proposal is for 0.8 parking stalls/unit. Proposed City policy requires 1 spot per unit minimum. (previous 1.7 per 3 bedroom, 1.45 for 2 bedroom). Developers latest project on Oliphant provided 0.9 min and that was near Large Urban Village.

The Developer's "Development review Information Sheet was reviewed. Errors on the sheet were found under the "Existing R-2 Zone" column, namely the permitted number of units and the required number of parking stalls. The need for a Correction and the handout for the JBNA General Meeting was discussed.

Presentation: Peter deHoog, Architect, Michael Dillistone, Planning Consultant, and Leonard Cole, Developer - Urban Core Ventures

Met with City for revised plan – in response to high cost of land attempt to provide some attainable units, look at a height and other townhouse developments in neighbourhood. Showed early iterations of building and new; Mr. deHoog presented slides; architecturally similar to previous proposals - looks like 4 buildings, actually 2 buildings from initial design of a single building, 14 units with 11 parking stalls, with bike parking, will have an accessible lift. Seismic will be what is required under building code. Provided partial shadow studies greatest impact to neighbours to north in 5pm evening during the fall (no winter time comparison). Elevation will be greater than house to north, same height as White Eagle hall, will be higher elevation than house to south. Set-back eight feet from sidewalks, similar to walk-ups found in New York and Montreal.

Q/A with near-by residents who are within the 100 meter notification area:

C: Ladysmith resident – opposed due to size, scope, parking – no parking on Montreal as it is now – shifting to 2 and 3 BR units will not necessarily reduce cars – will create undue pressures and stress. Wrong zoning – is zoned for 2 duplex not reasonable – a cash grab – about making money

C: Niagara resident – looking at streetscape (site lines) – the proposal does not respect the streetscape - setbacks (greenspace) from west of Montreal to Oswego. Concerned about survival of mature Hawthorne trees- doesn't support.

C: Ladysmith resident – if you look at the JBNP would two duplexes already double present density – density is a problem at the time of creating the JBOCP - there is nothing in the existing plan to allow for this level of density

C: Niagara resident – opposed due to parking, huge burden of parking now, the tennis, rugby, huge density, lives in 1100 sq ft with family and is crowded – sq ft of new 5 units 1000 sq to 1100 sq is small for a family – the only common green space is small – not good enough for family with kids – concerned about people buying for investment and renovations – this is not a solutions

C: Niagara resident – understood heritage houses would be moved to property but was not supported by city hall; is this accurate? how many properties do you own in JB and how many developments are you proposing for JB? Worried about precedent – tired of making presentations to city hall without being acknowledged by city hall – concerns about parking – concerned about the shadow study

C: Montreal St resident – moved in 1yr ago – feels really no real change although community not in support of this proposal – had concerns about the increase to the childcare project, understands the need for more child care spaces, but doesn't see the need to increase density here

C: Ladysmith resident – echo's fellow neighbours – are zoned less than a duplex, should have a secondary suite or garden suite – this is more density – these are not family seized units – similar to Yaletown in Vancouver where schools closed as units weren't suitable for families.

A: Current zoning for the lots are R2

C: Niagara resident - across from property – too much density – not a positive thing to neighbourhood, parking, increased traffic.

C: Niagara resident – across the street – likes the building, mildly pleased have come down in numbers, need parking for all units, need to think smart, don't want a West End (Vancouver) situation, are going to develop in this area needs to address the concerns of the neighbours, and doesn't want to take all the light out of her garden. Thinks we need the density now rather than have something more dense come forward. But is conflicted.

C: Ladysmith resident – deeply offended from 19 units to 14 as though it is a grand jester, concern about parking and the JBNP not being adhered to, financial gain

C: Montreal St resident – concerns about existing parking and safety of accessing the street, the impact of additional traffic – already too much congestion

C: Ladysmith St res – 14 units and 11 parking stalls, could have 17 extra cars parking on street if each owner has 2 cars.

Q: Question form Chair: 11 parking spots – who gets parking and who doesn't – if 14 units being sold

A: Parking will be included at sale stage of units – 3 BR units will have priority

Q: But if first purchasers are smaller units and want parking withl they be able to purchase parking

A: Larger units will have priority

C: 200 Niagara St – parking – what is a barrier to creating a parking stall for each unit other than cost? Looking for fewer suites and large suites for families.

A: Building house for people vs/vs cars – millennials don't have cars – many people don't have cars and it is a budgetary concern.

C: Ladysmith St – parking study an insult – more robust parking studies need to be done.

Q from Chair: Some time ago the JBNA DRC requested that the parking study be done on an event day, was the parking study done during an event day?

A: No – could ask that new parking study be done on an event day.

C: Ladysmith resident – is a millennial can't afford to buy in City – project too big, parking not issue

C: Ladysmith resident – supports attainable housing but this is not attainable housing nor is it affordable – smaller units

C: Dallas street co-op resident– housing co-ops are affordable housing – very concerned about the design – what is the height of basement units and sq ft? Very concerned about cost – doesn't believe it will be affordable – also concerned about flooding.

Outside of 100 meters area:

C: Pilot St – have built a duplex on the same sized property which adhered to the OCP and JBNP. This proposal doesn't respect the community.

Q from Chair: Will there be a covenant to property to prevent AirBnB or short term rentals as discussed in earlier proposal.

A: No

C: San Jose – when a higher density happens it impacts the houses surrounding them and pressures for more density – doesn't feel it serves the neighbourhood – already have extreme density from seasonal visitors – want our neighbourhood to remain its natural beauty and greenery.

C: Downtown resident – lives in 700 sq ft unit – does support feels it could sustain their family – doesn't own a car and would love to live here.

C: Rithet St resident - lived in JB 35 yrs – don't want cruise ships here, doesn't like sewage – continue to advertise Victoria – supports building.

C: Renter – senior fixed income – lived here 25 yrs - feels James Bayer's don't change

C: Government St resident– feels a little too much for area – feels total lack of green space in this proposal – should be fewer units

C: Simcoe St resident – renter – sold home – Victoria should have addressed these issues 20 yrs ago – feels nice development – not affordable for her – but maybe for others

C: St James St resident– feels is affordable for him – feels better than renting

C: Dallas Rd resident - does like design of building – but doesn't know if it is the right building for the site.

C: Menzie St resident – speaking as an individual – city done a lot of work on parking and came back with some excellent analysis 1-1 stalls – math is easy – 14 units – 14 stalls – concern right target for acquisition for Airbnb if not in by-laws of strata will not be controllable – if developer serious about ensuring won't be short term rentals should put into the "standard by-laws".

C: Preferred developers plan B of two separate houses with light housekeeping units.

C: What does current zoning allow to what is proposing?

C: Single family allows for height that is being proposed for this development – would be 3 spots per house – proposal is 8800 vs 6600 sq ft if houses – open site greenspace 30% proposal.

ATTACHMENT: *Letter received re 71-75 Montreal St Proposal*

DATE: May 6, 2017

TO: James Bay Community Association and Land Use Committee
Victoria Mayor and Council

FROM: Pat McGuire, __ Dock Street

RE: 71 & 75 Montreal Street Development Proposal by Urban Core Ventures Ltd.

I am opposed to creating a new zone for increased housing at 71 & 75 Montreal Street and the proposal for 14 units and 11 underground parking spaces.

Firstly, I want RENTAL or CO-OP HOUSING units built to respond to this city's need for rental and reasonably affordable accommodation. NOT \$1500 or so for a bachelor apartment.

What is the square footage of each and every unit proposed?

This proposal suggests a two-storey building with a basement.

"... is in keeping with the size and scale of a traditional James Bay neighbourhood, at two-storeys plus a basement, which is well designed and provides livable dwelling units for purchase that are attainable given current market conditions". Just what are the proposed sale prices in the overheated housing market? I want specifics, not generalities.

Is it likely that the basement would be developed for separate accommodation by the buyer? Then what parking demands will result?

I also have a bias against underground living - the occupant has overhead noise, unless the building is cement - and this proposal is for wood - and natural light is minimal. Not healthy.

Building underground parking is expensive. Offering 50% of parking spaces vs slightly more total units is unrealistic, unfortunately. People still want cars to get to work - and that can be out of the downtown core - and to perhaps travel out of town. Not everyone signs on to the Car Share program. So, there will be increased pressure for on-street parking. While the 100 block of Montreal Street doesn't necessarily regularly fill up with cars, it can, due to the Breakwater renovation and subsequent increased popularity with the public. Neighbouring streets already feel such pressure.

The space for bikes is generous and appealing.

However, this project is too dense; the parking pressures will exacerbate existing neighbour parking; the units are for sale and will not be offered at reasonable prices due to the inflated housing market; it does not provide rental accommodation that the City requires for its citizens.

Change the proposal to a Housing Co-op, or a rental building - both with fewer units - and I might be more supportive.

Pat McGuire
__ Dock Street