



James Bay Neighbourhood Association

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Victoria, B.C., Canada

www.jbna.org

March 5th, 2018

Mayor and Council,
City of Victoria

Dear Mayor Helps and Councillors,

Re: CALUC Community Meeting: 415-435 Michigan Street

The community meeting to consider the proposal at 415-435 30 Michigan Street was held on February 14th (122 attendees). Attached please find an excerpt of the General Meeting minutes regarding the proposal (Attachment "A").

The meeting was successful in that most items associated with the project were raised, but unsuccessful as most present were not afforded the opportunity to voice their views on the proposal and a few residents were denied access to the facility (estimate 3 residents). The constrained time, due to limited access to the facility, and communications exacerbated by the absence of a sound system, reduced opportunity.

The time constraint was created by insistence of both proponents (Michigan and Parry proposals) to present at the February JBNA General Meeting. Additionally, both proponents went well over the time suggested for presentations, with a significant portion of the presentation time based around, not focused on, the proposed development.

The negative impact of not having a sound system with meetings of 100+ attendees cannot be understated. When recognized to speak, people must raise their voices to be heard in a large room, thereby raising the general temperature.

There was also a general animosity among many in attendance due to the construction/management issues associated with the Regent and Charter Towers. The meeting Chair emphasized the need for separation of land-use from landlord issues.

Nevertheless, we believe the salient points were raised with the proposal.

Meeting participants' comments were generally on three common themes: the parking variance, the loss of greenspace, and the impact of the proposed development on the whole of Michigan Street.

Regarding parking, tower residents cite the need for the property owner to supply parking for existing and anticipated future tenants: parking for vehicles and bikes. Residents from beyond the property also expressed the need for themselves, their guests, and for services. An example of emergency workers being able to access a property across the street as City vehicles were mid-block (City vehicles couldn't park on side of streets as there were no spots available). Residents did not accept the consultants' assessment of the parking 'availability' as a credible assessment of the off-street parking on this block.

While the consultant suggests that the parking assessment was done with a 17% vacancy in the rental towers, tenants suggest that at recent times vacancy rate may be between 25-50%. The proponent's suggested use of 40% of the off-street parking space on the block, or 25 parking spots, in lieu of providing on-site parking spots was questioned.

Parking also drew strident opposition from both nearby and distant residents who do not live at Regent/Charter, all stating that the street is already congested with cars. Surprisingly, at the DRC meeting, when queried as to the parking needs of the current tenants, the owner explained that no record was being kept of who is accessing the existing parking lot.

Michigan Street is seen, and used, as a pleasant walking street with tree canopy and large building frontage set-backs which compensate for the narrowness of the street itself. This greenspace was acknowledged as a valuable asset for residents in Regent/Charter and for the whole community. The proposed development would increase site coverage by 50% and significantly reduce open space. The reduction of street frontage from 15m to 5m greatly diminishes the green way. The introduction of a complex into the set-back greenspace was seen as the precedent which could create a tumbling of the greenway along this narrow street.

The proponents could not respond to questions regarding the tree canopy, such as how many large mature trees would be removed.

Residents suggested that any additional building should occur on the large parking lot in the rear (south) of the building. Underground parking could increase parking for all while maintaining the green amenity at the north side of the pool area.

The proponent presented an almost contradictory approach to the current parking and the additional needs with the addition of 24 housing units, 12 of which are considered to be

“family-oriented”. The proponent suggested that additional vehicle parking would not be needed, leaning on the existing parking lot and street use; ie. 138 stalls for the proposed combined 219 units, well below the Schedule C 269 requirement. This contrasted with the approach to bike parking, with a proposal to build a new bike shed for 32 bikes for the 24 new units, without accommodating the needs of tenants in the other 195 housing units.

The JBNA DRC had suggested to the proponent that any talk of further development on the site wait until Capital Park was completed. The parking impact on Michigan Street of 1000+ government employees, Capital Park retail customers/deliveries, library clientele and deliveries, and those visiting government offices, would not be fully realized for another three years.

The JBNA CALUC-DRC would welcome the proponents back to another JBNA General Meeting with a revised proposal that would respond to the density (vehicle and bike parking) and greenspace matters raised by residents.

Attachment “B” contains comments from nearby residents that were submitted before, during, and after the meeting.

For your consideration,



Marg Gardiner
President, JBNA

Cc: JBNA Board
Rob Bateman, CoV Senior Planner
Deane Strongitharm, CitySpaces
Peter Huggins, Burrows Huggins Architects
Ashley Burke, Starlight Investments

ATTACHMENT “A”: *Excerpt from Minutes of February 14th, 2018 CALUC meeting*

5. CALUC - 415-435 Michigan Street Development Proposal (122 in attendance)

Deane Strongitharm, CitySpaces Consulting Ltd.

Peter Huggins, Burrows Huggins Architects

Ashley Burke & Trevor Potts, Starlight Investments (observing)

Mairi Bosomworth, Transportation Planner, Watt Consulting Group

JBNA Development Review Committee Report: presented by Tim VanAlstine.

Tim VanAlstine reported on the Development review Committee meetings.

May 31, 2017: The proponents hosted a meeting for JBNA DRC followed by a meeting with nearby residents. Tim VanAlstine, Marg Gardiner, Linda Carlson, Wayne Shillington, and Trevor Moat met with Ashley Burke (Starlight Investments) Peter and Michael Huggins and Michael Huggins (Burrows Huggins Architects), Deane Strongitharm and Brenda McBain (City Spaces Consulting) and Patrick (UVic student).

Suggestions from DR Committee:

- Parking unrealistic. Recognized historical zoning and parking limitations creating a need to mitigate existing parking rather than add more load
- Suggest waiting until Capital Park completed when more employees and more residents move into James Bay
- Give serious consideration to allotment garden opportunities since current tenants use public space.
- Supports family housing in community

At the May meeting, we were told rezoning not needed, only a development permit required.

On **November 23 2017**, we were contacted by the proponent’s agent, who informed us that a rezoning was now needed due to height (proposed being lower than permitted).

December 13, 2017: Tim VanAlstine, Marg Gardiner, Trevor Moat and Janice Mayfield met with Ashley Burke (Starlight Investments) Peter Huggins (Burrows Huggins Architects), Daniel Casey (Watt Consulting Group), and Deane Strongitharm (City Spaces Consulting).

The proposal for 24-stacked townhouse development, to be rental. Twelve 2-bedroom units over 12-studio units. Upper units planned to have roof-top gardening (for 12 of the 24 units).

Key Issue: PARKING

- Parking issues remain - over **130** parking stalls below Schedule “C”
- Proponent’s traffic consultant stated that parking should not be a problem as this portion of Michigan seems to be under utilized much of the time. The parking analysis by Watt provided suggests a surplus of 5 units. That analysis is based on the existing population in Charter House and Regent Towers, and may not fully access current use of public street space by the tenants.
- This position counters the City’s proposed off-street policy, Schedule “C”, which was created by the same consultant.

Key Issue: AESTHETICS & AMENITY

- The proposed structure will take the streetscape of Michigan closer to the roadway. There could be a domino impact in the years ahead.
- Setback out of sync with street.
- Suggested utility area location be rethought as the sunny location might make garden plots
- Elimination of large greenspace bordering Michigan
- Starlight has NOT been monitoring resident parking in parking lot or on the street.

COMMUNITY MEETING PRESENTATION:

Deane Strongitharm, CitySpaces Consulting Ltd, introduced Starlight representatives, architect and transportation consultants.

24 unit stacked townhouse building – 12 2-br units and 12 studio suites – combination of singles and families – rental stock – will be market rates

R3 zoning required 21m height build – proposal does not reach this height and rezoning was required. Density is not changing.

CoV OCP designates site as Urban residential; located directly adjacent to Large urban village, Proponent suggests that requirements of OCP met:

- ~ Ground-oriented low to mid-rise residential buildings.
- ~ Transportation and mobility 7.12.1, 7.12.2
- ~ Placemaking Urban design & Heritage 8.43 8.44 8.45
- ~ Housing – housing diversity – 13.9 & 13.10 met (spirit + goals)

Peter Huggins – architect – working on project with Starlight 2 yrs+.

~ 2016 to 2017, 2% in rental stock only 0.01% relief in needed to address vacancies for city.

~ Current vacancy rate in CoV 0.07%

~ 6 townhouse units will face Michigan and 6 units will face south to pool side of property

~ 2 trees planned to be removed - replacement trees, 2 to 1 of existing trees on boulevard

~ urban agricultural will not current work on site – still investigating possibilities

~ addressing transportation/car use – identified MODO parking areas with a 5 minute walking radius of building and also identified bus stops with radius as a way to address lack of parking. ~ buildings will last in excess of 50 yrs, hence changing transportations and mobility needs

~ working with the Schedule “C” of CoV.

Mairi Bosomworth – Watt Consultants - parking study for site

~ existing parking 104 cars, on street 25 cars, total 129 cars = ratio of 0.73 parking rate demand per rental unit 176 units occupied 19 units vacant = 14 car spaced units unused using calculation of 0.73 spacing per rental unit

~ Calculate residents should have access to 40% of parking spaces between Oswego and Menzies = 25 cars

Concludes new build requires 22 parking spaces, hence will increase demand to 140 vehicles from 129, implying a shortage of 2 parking spots (with planned use of on-street parking).

Q/A first opportunity given to those who live within 100m of 415-435 Michigan Street

C: lives in 3 unit townhouse down the street, with 2 parking spaces/unit, underground, doesn't believe proposal has adequate parking – will be a lot of push-back since inadequate parking

C: Trees 4 existing trees marked for removal (not 2 as stated) – doesn't believe parking will be adequate - move development to other side of the pool and create 2 tiered parking garage

A: Proponent could not verify any tree/landscaping information

C: 435 Michigan resident – states shadowing is inaccurate – doesn't agree with figures on parking study. Questions seismic concerns as existing building

A: Shadow on schematic is not accurate - shadow studies will be part of rezoning application

Q: 415 Michigan resident – concerned about loss of green space in JB – feels the existing green space has been a part of the community for the last 45 yrs+ there is too much density in the area. Feels new structure will be a blight – and cost will require more than what is proposed for number of residents per unit.

Q: what will be market value of the units

A: will be determined at the time of completed based on market value

C: don't need luxury housing

C: resident manager across the street from site – already a nightmare with current construction and parking is a nightmare – so much traffic and parking that even garbage collection has been challenging – suggest need to redo parking study – has residents in her building that park 3 blocks away from building as no on-street parking for those residents/visitors

A: Study was conducted on a Thursday at approx. 1:30pm

Q: 415 Michigan resident – R3 to site specific – 40% open green space requirement – is there a 40% open green space in the proposal.

A: Slightly under the 40% currently covers two lots. 34.2% open space being proposed. There will be 3 variances requested in the rezoning, green space, coverage and parking

Q: Alma Place resident – there is no street parking on Alma and her guests are not permitted to park on Michigan – on Michigan there is huge challenges for CoV vehicles, Telus vehicles, etc. Capacity of street is exceeded – manoeuvring on street is impossible – what if there is an emergency – what happens when ER vehicles need access?

Q: when is project proposed to start?

A: 8 to 10 months away to start and 1½ to 2 yrs to complete

Q: Is blasting required for project

A: No blasting indicated

Q: has been a resident for 10 yrs at site – do not want loss of common space – moving project back and creating alternate green space is necessary. Parking is horrible when trying to exit site. Is the current bike shed being removed?

C: two bike sheds on parking on site are you removing existing?

A: No biking storage where garbage area is proposed – will create parking for 32 bikes

C: has endured noise activity for 2 yrs. Parking, green are key issues

Q: Charter House resident – the trees are protected are they going to be cut down

A: some trees have been identified to be removed some are not – can't provide concrete answer will have to defer to arborist who couldn't attend tonight

C: Site coverage proposed to increase from the permitted 20% to 29%, a 50% increase !

Q: to Marg/Chair – has JBNA experienced such backlash from a project in the area?

A: yes

C: affordable housing don't need luxury housing

C: feels it is a warm fuzzy presentation – is opposed to the zoning and density.

A: Proponent - the project meets with the community plan and is only before the community due to the height requirement to be rezoned

ATTACHMENT "B": Notes-e-mails received before the CALUC meeting

From: nathalie vazan

Subject: James Bay's Proposed Development between 415 and 435 Michigan St.

Date: February 17, 2018 8:59:59 PM PST

Cc: Victoria Mayor and Council mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca and others . . .

Hello Marg,

The object of my message is to express my views on the Proposed Development of a 24-rental unit building on Michigan St which would be located within 100 metres from Regent Tower (415 Michigan St) where I have been living for the last 11 years (since 2006).

Unfortunately, I was turned away from the February 14 CALUC-Community Meeting since New Horizons' venue had already reached maximum capacity when I arrived shortly after 7 PM.

Over the last three days, I have had enlightening conversations with fellow residents of Regent Tower, Charter House and of other James Bay buildings. Hence, after thorough reflection, here is my position, presented to you in four items, regarding the zoning application at stake.

- 1) The lack of parking space for residents and visitors of that proposed building would create congestion on that portion of Michigan St, which would create chaos and headaches for drivers, pedestrians and bikers, therefore impeding on our quality of life.
- 2) That congestion on Michigan Street, between Menzies and Oswego, could jeopardize the delivery of emergency services, such as ambulance, police and firefighters to our area's residents.
- 3) This building would offer only high-priced rental units, that is, \$ 1 600 per month for bachelors and \$ 3 000 per month for 2-BDR suites. This is NOT considered affordable rent. Therefore, this building would only be suitable for a small percentage of renters and would NOT address the serious need for reasonably established rent for the majority of renters in our community.
- 4) The loss of green space and of beautiful old trees in between Charter House and Regent Tower would be another major deterrent to the construction of that proposed building.

Marg, considering the above-mentioned reasons, I believe that this Proposed Development entails too many negative effects to our neighbourhood.

Thus, I am strongly opposed to the construction of such a building on that green space between 415 and 435 Michigan St.

Best regards,

Nathalie Vazan
XXX 415 Michigan St.
Victoria, B.C.

From: Stan Stuart

Subject: 415/435 michigan street redevelopment

Date: February 2, 2018 2:57:19 PM PST

copy of letter sent to mayor and council Feb 2 owner plans to build 24 additional rental suites without any additional parking. zoning calls for 269. plan provides for 138 recent history no indication of parking need because existing building renovating now in third year with lots of vacancy and street full of parking both sides

On Feb 17, 2018, at 11:59 AM, Marg Gardiner, JBNA <marg.jbna@shaw.ca> wrote:
Thanks Valerie,

I agree with most of your comments. There should have been only one presentation and we should have had a mic system.

The reason we had the 2 presentations was that ARYZE pushed to have their presentation in February rather than March which would have worked much better and we would not have been as pressed for time. Believe me, I wanted them to come in March, but they insisted and others thought time would permit. They knew there would be severe time constraints on their presentation if they chose to come in February rather than March.

It is very difficult to control meetings of this size without a mic, which also contributed. The roving mic is usually handled by a board member (Wayne when there) and that controls the discussion and limits back and forth. Using louder voices is a necessity to be heard in a large room and in itself brings anger. (when my son went through a period of deafness as a young boy I realized how hard it was hard to speak really loudly without looking stressed.) We hope that mic use will be restored soon. I could barely hear the elderly man who spoke while seated - until I see the minutes I will not know if the secretary caught what he said. A mic system will also help our throats.

And the short time period permitted for meetings adds to the constraints - some neighbourhoods have access to facilities until 11pm or midnight.

It is important to know that people attending most JBNA meetings are not people we know - meaning regular attendees - especially when there is a development. Most with development proposals are people who have a direct interest in the development. What also didn't assist was the meshing of the rental issue, the asbestos, and fear of renoviction, with zoning rights.

My guess is that half of the attendees were not those who bought into the area, but tenants, many being longer-term tenants than many residents who had "bought into the area". Of course, in a real way, these tenants have bought into the area with their years of residency.

And yes, Lisa is a master at her Mayor's Drop-In. I have seen a lot of information exchanged at those meetings with other attendees often providing information/suggestions as the conversation stays focussed even with several different topics being raised. They work very well.

Although it may not have appeared so last Wednesday, JBNA is known to be quite balanced with respect to developments, with a few hundred being developed from 2011-2016 and another 550 units approved in past 2 years, being built/planned now, and more coming. And most of those developments involved little in the way of contentious debate.

Regards,

Marg

On 2018-02-17, at 11:12 AM, Valerie Elliott wrote:

Dear Marg

I attended the James Bay neighbourhood meeting for the first time on Wednesday February 14th and was greatly saddened by the anger and abuse directed at the presenters. Whilst I understand the reason to limit speakers to those living within 100 metres I was disappointed that more time was not allotted for all those residents and members of the association who took the time to come to the meeting to voice their concerns. People attend meetings to have input and to glean information from the developers. The developers in turn want feedback for improvements to their development. As a new member of the James Bay community I was embarrassed at the behaviour of grown men and women. It turned into a shouting match. I thought the

developers and architects were respectful and ready to hear constructive ideas for improvement, but they were not afforded the same respect to them. I was particularly interested in the inspiring presentation that Luke from ARYZE gave. He tried to put across the group's intention of blending the new with the old, and the care the group had given to this project to keep the uniqueness of the area. He was abruptly stopped by a very rude member of the audience, and by you. There were others including me who wanted him to continue but he was shut down.

I can understand the residents' frustration regarding more development and noise from construction in the area, and the concerns about parking but what I gleaned was a group of people who were fixed in their ideas and were not at all open to other ways of solving some of the problems faced by the community.

Certainly parking was of high priority and needs to be addressed. Change is the only certainty in this life and in my experience adapting to it and finding ways to solve the problem is much more preferable than resisting it. Both groups had addressed this concern. However the residents were not willing to be open to new ways even though the Shared Streets project compiled by the JBNA itself, were promoting ways of providing safety in the area. What I heard and came away from the meeting with, was their total resistance to change, their anger at having to confront change - and a form of elitism. (e.g.. I bought in this area and want to continue living in this area without making any compromise or having consideration for others wanting to be part of James Bay)

As the president of this group I believe it is up to you to set the tone of meetings and to ask those who are abusive to leave. I believe this would have a great effect on the result of the meetings. However this must be presented to those in attendance in a positive way to allow each person to feel part of the solution. I observed an impatience on your part with your continual need to hurry the presenters and shut down those not within 100 metres. I totally understand that you were influenced by the time constraints but also it seemed that you were being controlled by those who were not interested in finding solutions.

As a new member of the JBNA, I request that you and your committee address my concerns and put into place respectful ways of conducting a meeting. There were two equally important topics on the agenda which needed time for full discussion. Perhaps as there are many projects being put forth to residents at this time, a separate meeting for each project up for discussion could be held to address these concerns. If this were implemented, the meetings would be shortened considerably and the residents would have time to give their concerns, ideas and opinions in a respectful manner. Isn't that what neighbourhood meetings are all about?

I do understand that the presidents's job is a difficult one but by committing to this position I believe you have a duty to those who elected you to provide positive leadership, time for full discussion, and a welcoming environment to guests who are invited to speak. I am quite sure these guests left with a very negative impression of the residents of our neighbourhood.

I do thank you for suggesting the various ways of voicing concerns to council - one of which, was attending the drop-in meetings the mayor provides. I attended the last one and was totally impressed by the way she conducted the meeting. She asked everyone to give topics for discussion and systematically addressed each one of them. Some groups who were quite negative at the beginning went away feeling heard and pleased that she would bring their concerns to council in a positive way allaying their fears. She took all questions and listened to everyone even though she had another meeting immediately after that one. How lucky we have such an open-minded person as the mayor, who has a vision for Victoria, including James Bay, which will eventually serve all residents within the community. I believe that if more people, especially those with concerns from James Bay, attended these meetings they would be pleasantly surprised by the mayor's ability to listen objectively and come up with solutions in creative ways.

I hope my concern is addressed to ensure this does not happen again.

Respectfully

Valerie Elliott