

Dear Victoria Councillors,

I applaud those of you who stood firm in your opposition to the Cook/Pendergast development recently.

Developers who opt to offer the city token funds to put towards affordable housing elsewhere perpetuate the NIBY attitude that destroys the diversity of our neighbourhoods and denies those of modest income the right to live in a diverse, walkable, and vibrant community. Cook St. Village is becoming out of reach for those of us who have for many years called it home but cannot afford to stay.

Affordable housing was a priority for voters in the last election and continues to be an issue that councillors will be held accountable.

Sincerely,
Lynn Taylor
Victoria

Mayor and Council,

I have just read that you have turned down a development in Cook St. Village as it does not fit the adjusted plans of affordable housing. Reading the article in the Times Colonist , it states that affordable housing was not a requirement in the initial application for the project. Interesting how the rules can change at a whim?

So, you turn down a project because there is no affordable housing, yet you spend over a million dollars on adding a small city park at the corner of Bank and Leighton. Could that money be better spent on affordable housing built by the City of Victoria?

Did we have a huge urgency for a park the size of a double city lot?

I shake my head...

Paul McLauchlan
Victoria.

Good morning,

I wanted to email to thank the council for voting against the proposed Cook street village development which did not include affordable housing.

The homelessness crisis in Canada and in Victoria, with which we are all so familiar, will continue to worsen unless concrete and structural changes to address the root causes are made, and we know this includes a severe shortage of social and affordable housing since the 1980s. Especially in a city like Victoria where rental prices and availability is already so challenging, this decision affirms the council's commitment to taking this issue seriously. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,
Sydnie Lazina
Victoria, BC

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am Jasveer. I'm originally from Singapore City. I applaud the recognition for affordable housing in Victoria. Coming from Singapore, growing up there till I was 30, I am well versed with this issue.

Should it come at an expense of progressive development? Of course there are programs in Singapore that help its residents across the board, but what about in Victoria?

I would like to suggest a motion where the first floor of any new development would cater to either a rent-to-own or a compact affordable lifestyle living.

This link (<https://nestron.house/portfolio/cube-two/>) showcases a compact lifestyle living for a family of 3 for a price of 59 000. Please have a look at what it showcases and how any developer can easily add this concept to their first level of affordability contribution.

This motion will actually benefit all. The developers - The people - The City.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Jasveer Singh Bal

Dear Council and Aragon,

I am struggling with accepting the mayor's exceptional move today to bring this back to council, which is obviously the result of heavy lobbying and pressure by Aragon who refuse to accept defeat and financial loss.

I have just one question I am hoping either a member of council or Aragon (or both) can answer:

How exactly will Aragon's contribution to the affordable housing fund or potential addition to the project benefit us and our neighbour specifically as the ones who will permanently lose our affordable housing?

We are the ones directly affected, but no amount of money funnelled into a housing fund will actually help the people, us, who are the reason for the contribution.

I hope council takes the time to review opposition letters from the community early on in the project in 2017 and 2018 which show Aragon's true colours. There was no daycare offered initially, and no potential nurse practitioner space. There are several letters from residents citing Lenny Moy's bullying, berating, and straight up laughing at me at the mere suggestion affordability be included in the development. His now infamous quote to me "It's not my problem if you can't afford to live in Victoria, that's your problem" will stay with me forever. Luke Ramsay's thinly veiled political "letter to the editor" can spin it anyway he wants, but this project has never been about the community and has always been about maximum profit and nothing else.

I obviously have much more to say but I am resigned to the fact that if the mayor wants this to happen badly enough, it will happen, and I have given up.

Sincerely,

Amy White

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am pleased to note that this project recently declined by Council will be brought back before Council for reconsideration. My understanding was that this project failed to be approved based on the question of affordability or in some minds the lack of it. I would hazard a guess that this project once completed would sell out very quickly demonstrating that it is affordable to many. I believe it would be appropriate to point out that the basic principal of supply and demand is a force that affects the Real Estate Market very directly. Simply put If a rental tenant purchases a residence then that vacated suite will be available for another. If a homeowner moves from one type of accommodation to another it allows for movement within the market place. The most important factor in all of this, especially in a time of increasing housing prices is to have a steady supply of housing options available to satisfy the demand. In some respects it really doesn't matter where the supply comes into the market. As the supply increases and satisfies demand housing prices will stabilise in fact an oversupply will reduce prices. If development and construction of housing is stifled and the demand not satisfied prices will increase. It is incumbent on Councils to understand this basic principal of supply and demand and make their decisions accordingly.

Best regards,
Bev Highton
Owner/Broker

**569 Johnson Street
Victoria, BC V8W 1M2 Canada**

With the changes in the makeup of the council I feel that the Aragon proposal be revisited. Aragon has done extensive consultation with the local community as well as the city staff. This has resulted in numerous revisions and amendments. The plan included a sizable contribution to the affordable housing fund a proposed partnership to the Cook Street Activity Centre. All for the benefit of the community. The proposal offered a number of options for families and seniors. Just last week the council approved another proposal very similar to Aragon's proposal. There were not restrictions placed on it. Why Aragon? For the benefit of all concerned this proposal needs revisiting.

Howard Jacques

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

Given that there is now a new councillor on the board, would it be possible to have another vote on the Aragon Cook Street proposal in order to break the tie vote? It seems to me to be a solid and highly attractive proposal, with a generous contribution to the affordable housing fund and a welcome community centre partnership proposal. It is also a thing of beauty, and the developers have worked through the expectations and requirements of the city council for many years. If Stephen Andrew were to support the rejection, it would be a final say. If he were to support the development, there would be a collective sigh of relief amongst, I suspect, the majority of Victoria residents.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jan Jeffers

3025 Glasgow Street

Victoria, BC V8T 5B9

Not a single reply to my question in my previous email from council or Aragon about how affordability contribution will benefit us in any way speaks volumes. It will go to benefit someone else, somewhere else. A generous Tenant Assistance Policy is commendable, however it is not long-term or equal to what we are losing.

May I kindly suggest the issue of the activity centre space being sold to the city and the actual housing development be kept separate? Telling these seniors they could potentially have this space if they speak out in favour of the development is almost bribery and it is not fair. The two issues should be kept separate as they are unrelated; if Aragon actually cared about the neighbourhood as much as they pretend they would sell the space to the city anyway and not make it conditional on the larger project's approval. It's all smoke and mirrors, profit is and has always been their only true motive.

Amy White

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 10, 2020, at 7:10 PM, amy white <> wrote:

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Amy White

Dear Mayor and Councillors:

I was disappointed to learn that although council had decided against the Cook Street Village project, just a few days later it was announced that the subject will soon be revisited. Why bother having a vote if the result is not respected?

I am a long-time resident of Cook Street Village, and I have considerable concerns about the proposal:

Character of Cook Street Village: I live in the heart of the Village, on Pendergast Street, so I will be directly affected by the proposed construction. Cook Street Village has a charming atmosphere that draws lots of tourists in the summer and that's much valued by its current residents. A four or five storey condominium project that leaves no room for setback variances would destroy our unique character. Are there not bylaws in place to regulate the aesthetics of new developments? Why not have a design that's compatible with the neighbourhood? Once you destroy the charm of the Village, it's gone forever. But with good will, planning and design the character and identity of Cook Street Village (and the city of Victoria) can be preserved.

Traffic: I have already seen an increase in traffic on the Village's narrow streets. With this huge complex, traffic will increase even more. And Vancouver Street has pretty well been closed down to make way for cyclists, which will confound the problem.

Taxes and Affordability: A luxury condominium project will raise the land value of surrounding buildings and taxes will increase. The owners of the apartment building I live in have already suffered due to the BC government stalling rent increases. If you add an extra tax burden, there will be less incentive for the owners to want to continue to offer stable rental housing. There are fewer and fewer rental options in Cook Street Village and the buildings have aged, so it's possible that the owners of my building may decide to sell or completely rebuild, which will add to the rental crisis.

Airbnb: You just have to look at the listings on Airbnb Victoria, mostly before the pandemic, to see how many luxury condos are/were offered. I've even seen houses in my neighbourhood listed on Airbnb. Who will end up buying these condos? One of the arguments is that young families can get a start with these (luxury) condos, but there is also the chance that they will be snapped up by people who will rent them by the day or week. This will increase traffic and alter the fabric of the Village.

Retail Spaces on Ground Level: There are many storefronts for rent in the city at this time. Who knows if they will reopen. The unique stores, coffee shops and pubs in Cook Street Village are a drawing card, while the box-like retail spaces shown in the proposed diagram lack character and will probably have higher rents than their neighbours.

Aragon Developments: What is the intent of Aragon in wanting to build such a huge complex in the Village? Profitability. Nothing more. If they had wanted to blend in with other

buildings in the area and add to its charm, they would have proposed something less imposing. Also, and this is purely personal, I find that the panels on the building in the proposed diagram look cheap and gaudy. One possible solution is to construct townhomes, which can be angled to make the most of available space. Another suggestion is, of course, affordable rental housing.

I wonder how you would feel if a huge condo complex were to be constructed beside your home, for example, in cottage-filled Fernwood?

Thank you for your attention,

Nancy Gow

Mayor Lisa Helps and Councilors,

We are very disappointed that the council has turned down the proposed development at 328 Cook Street. It was a well thought out mixed use plan benefiting the neighbourhood in general and the Cook Street Village Activity Centre in particular.

While we recognise the need for more affordable housing in Victoria, and hope the developer can accommodate, we feel Victoria needs all kinds of housing.

This project should be allowed to go ahead. Please give it another review in the new year with an eye for a green light.

Thanks,

Herb and Phyllis Girard
1142 Chapman Street
Victoria BC
V8V 2T6

Dear Mayor and Council:

I've already sent an email voicing my concerns about the proposed Aragon Project in Cook Street Village, but I also wanted to forward an example of what I think would be a better fit for the Village.

The photo below is of the The Vicino, a condo/commercial complex on Menzies in James Bay. You'll notice that the whole complex is set back from the street and even includes a balcony for what is now a Bubby's. The condos are nicely scattered, creating a feeling of spaciousness and artistry, unlike the box-like building that Aragon has proposed. There are also a couple of cement tables on a small grassed area. The multi-dimensional design of the building creates a welcoming atmosphere for both shopping and living.

I have additional concerns about the Aragon proposed Aragon project. The condo market is sluggish at the moment, particularly for luxury condos. While walking by a recently built (2019) luxury condo building on Heywood Avenue, across from Beacon Hill Park, I noticed a 'for sale' sign on the property -- this after one year of occupancy. These signs give the idea of a transient neighbourhood, and I would hate to see them littering the sidewalk of Cook Street Village.

I would much prefer a more understated and creatively designed complex like the photo below, or even better, I would like to see attractive rental units (or even possibly townhomes).

Thank you for your attention.

Nancy Gow

Dear Mayor Helps and Victoria Council

I am writing to support the rezoning of 328 Cook Street for the creation of space for the Victoria Health Co-operatives Health Centre at the Cook Street Senior's Centre building. There are over 70,000 people in Victoria who do not have primary care practitioners. Many of them are friends in my age group of 65 - 75 years, but many are in all age groups. We clearly need more alternatives and a Nurse Practitioners can provide a great deal of the regular examinations and care with less expense. Providing health education to promote wellness can reduce health issues and save money. All of these activities can be provided by the Co-op.

I hope you will strongly consider this urgently needed facility for our Community.

Karen E Ledger BScN,
Health Educator and Nurse Therapist

Subject: Proposed development at Cook and Pendergast

Dear Ms. Potts,

I am responding to your argument, both at the Council meeting and in print regarding the Aragon Development at Cook and Pendergast. While I share your wish that the city provided more affordable housing, I was rather astounded with, what I believe was, the naive thought that the houses, which the developer bought and temporarily rented out, would remain affordable rentals. It is a spurious argument. If you ever walked or drove by the properties, you would see that they are in a state of disrepair. Should the development not be passed by the council, if and when Aragon returns to council, I am certain that the houses would either be renovated and sold or rented out at market value. I cannot see them remaining affordable housing year after year; particularly when they were purchased with the sole purpose of development. Presumably, the tenants would have known from the start of their rental arrangement, that this situation was temporary, and was never offered or expected to be, a long-term solution for their housing. The Aragon Development representatives, to their credit, did not point out the obvious flaw in the tenant's argument. Do you really believe she rented without knowing the situation and the short-term nature of it?

I believe that your decisions as a representative of the people of the City of Victoria, should be made on the basis of facts and probability. This aspect of your decision-making flies in the face of both logic and fact.

I am in favour of this development for many of the reasons stated by your colleagues who voted in the affirmative. We need family housing for all income levels in our city.

Again, I will emphasize the need for more affordable housing in the city of Victoria but emphatically disagree with one of the premises of your decision.

Sincerely,

J.A. Savio