



March 18, 2021

Attention: developmentservices@victoria.ca

Regarding: 1105 Caledonia Avenue Rezoning Pre-Application: Community Feedback

Dear Mayor and Council;

The Fernwood Community Association Land Use Committee (CALUC) met on March 4, 2021 via Zoom to discuss a proposed rezoning of 1105 Caledonia (Fernwood Coffee Co / Parsonage Café). Approximately 60 participants attended the meeting. The purpose of this letter is to report on feedback gathered during that meeting, as well as in comments received directly by the CALUC; through the City's Development Tracker Form; and through letters and emails to Mayor and Council on which the CALUC was cc'd. A total of 61 additional comments were received after the CALUC meeting.

A larger number of community members expressed support for Fernwood Coffee as a thriving business that contributes a sense of place in the community. It was noted as "central to the neighbourhood" by many residents, including as a source of local jobs. Several neighbours expressed "strong support" for the rezoning application, and neighbours from both communities expressed admiration for the way the business had adapted to thrive even during the pandemic.

There were also concerns raised by neighbours that are important to address. Seven residents in the immediate neighbourhood (1100 block of Caledonia) joined together in a letter-writing campaign against the rezoning. These residents do not represent the viewpoints of all immediate neighbours, and others who live on the 1100 block of Caledonia have spoken in favour of the application.

It is the position of the Fernwood CALUC that our role is to ensure concerns are heard and taken seriously. In that spirit, we offer the following comments.

Traffic and Parking

Neighbours pointed out that traffic and parking in the area can be an issue. Because of social distancing requirements, patrons often stand in the street, which can impede pedestrian traffic. While there are three parking spots reserved for customers, neighbours noted that this seems to be insufficient, with customers using residential or church parking inappropriately to visit the café.

There are also often large trucks parked out front of the cafe for deliveries. This makes it difficult for vehicles to turn around, to drive through on Caledonia (as oncoming traffic can be difficult to view), or to turn onto Caledonia from Cook Street. This situation was flagged as a potential safety issue, especially with people crossing the street while vision for drivers is limited.

The Fernwood CALUC was pleased that the business owner recognized that this was a valid concern and has suggested a loading zone on Cook Street that would benefit not only his business, but other businesses in North Park Village. When this suggestion was made in our LUC meeting, participants seemed to largely agree that this would help mitigate the issue related to truck traffic, although we note



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that it does not address the burden of parking. The Fernwood CALUC hopes that this possible solution to a valid safety concern will find support at City Hall.

Process and Precedent

There was also some concern that the City had overlooked the requirement for this rezoning in the first place. It seems that a lack of clarification during the original business application has exacerbated tensions related to this current rezoning, and we urge more care in the future to ensure that situations like this do not arise again. The process has been difficult for neighbours and for the business owner and could have been avoided.

Neighbours have expressed concern with the fact that the solution being proposed to the inappropriate approval is to rezone the property, rather than relocate the manufacturing aspect of the business's service. Retrofitting zoning to cover mistakes does not sit well with those who are concerned with fair and transparent processes. Other neighbours have expressed concern that this oversight has unfairly burdened the business owner, who has acted in good faith.

Those concerned with the precedent being set are worried that the rezoning could encourage further industrialization of a residential area in the future. However, it is important to note that many neighbours also expressed concern about the outcome of an *unsuccessful* rezoning application in this case: the potential loss of a local business, and the loss of local jobs.

Odor and Noise

A final concern brought forward by some residents is that the roastery produces both odor and noise that interfere with their right to quiet enjoyment of their property, especially in the midst of a pandemic when we are being asked to stay close to home.

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The comments that the Fernwood CALUC received directly are appended to this letter. These should be taken into consideration in addition to comments that were sent to Mayor and Council (some of which were cc'd to the CALUC – we have not reproduced them here) and in addition to those that were sent via the Development Tracker Form (again, not appended here).

Should you wish to discuss these comments further, please contact Kristin or Alieda at fernwoodlanduse@gmail.com.

Yours sincerely,

Kristin Atwood and Alieda Blandford, Co-Chairs
Fernwood Community Association Land Use Committee

/send to caluc@victoria.ca



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Email Comments regarding 1105 Caledonia

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You can proxy me as against the rezoning to allow wholesale manufacturing at 1105 Caledonia Avenue. I am not in favor of industrializing our neighborhood. [...] Fernwood Coffee has been wholesale manufacturing for the last three years on a site that is not zoned for this. Do you know why the city has allowed this to continue?

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I wish to support of the rezoning of Caledonia to allow the continued existence of The Parsonage and for Fernwood Coffee to continue roasting their delicious coffee.

The coffee product and the persons working in the shop are very much a part of a special community within this area. The bringing together of individuals in a safe manner during the pandemic has been successful mostly because of the coffee shops safe COVID practices whereas the clientele have so much respect for their service provider.

The roasting of Fernwood Coffee is important. I know I have sent many a bag across to the mainland as far as Toronto. To have it from our neighborhood is very special.

Please provide the rezoning; keep the community spirit and support for our locals.

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I'm writing to express my strong support for the proposed rezoning of the 1105 Caledonia (Fernwood Coffee / Parsonage Cafe) property to allow for limited manufacturing within the existing building.

I am a resident of Fernwood, drink Fernwood Coffee every morning, and often eat breakfast from the Parsonage Cafe. I can't think of a more quintessentially 'Fernwood' business-- it's local, quirky, and delicious. I understand that the roastery portion of Fernwood Coffee/Parsonage Cafe has helped keep them running throughout the pandemic and it would be terribly sad to see this business at risk of closure.

I hope that you will communicate my support for rezoning to the city so that Fernwood Coffee/Parsonage Cafe can keep its place as one of Fernwood's community hubs.

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I am writing in support of allowing a change to the zoning for Fernwood Coffee so they can keep their roastery running at the Caledonia location.

This company has been a community meeting place and they are community donors. They worked hard to maintain their business throughout the continuing pandemic. They care about their customers and their staff. We should support them to continue their business model.

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As a resident of Fernwood, I am in favour of 1105 Caledonia being rezoned to allow Fernwood Coffee to continue roasting at that location. Fernwood Coffee is my neighbourhood coffee shop of choice.



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Regarding the rezoning of the property housing the Fernwood Coffee. at 1105 Caledonia, We want Fernwood Cafe to continue operating as it has since relocating to Caledonia. The cafe is an asset to the neighborhood, it would be a shame to lose this gem.

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I am writing to support the application for rezoning at the Parsonage Cafe.

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I wanted to send this email listing my support for the Fernwood Coffee Co/Parsonage.

I understand a complaint has recently been made about their operations, but my understanding is that their roasting and wholesaling coffee is deemed 'manufacturing' and is not covered by the existing commercial zoning. During the pandemic, the roasting operation has allowed the Parsonage to continue serving coffee through these difficult times.

We need to do all we can to support local small businesses during such a challenging time for our communities. Operations like Fernwood are what make our region so special, and their work ensures economic vitality.

Please, allow Fernwood to keep operating as they have, and let's show some flexibility, so we can support our small businesses.

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I am writing to you today to express my concern that not allowing Fernwood Coffee Company/Parsonage to rezone will shut down a cornerstone business of Fernwood and North Park. As you know, small businesses have been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. They have had to adapt to new ways in order to stay afloat. If the Land Use Committee does not approve this rezoning application Parsonage would likely close and many Victorians will no longer be able to get the best breakfast bagel in the City.

As someone who regularly goes to Parsonage, I strongly encourage you to allow for the rezoning of Fernwood Coffee Company, so that Parsonage can keep serving the City of Victoria and its residents.

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I live one block north of the Parsonage property, and have done so for 20+ years. I am writing to voice my strong support for the Fernwood Coffee/Parsonage rezoning application that is before the Fernwood Community Association Land Use Committee (CALUC) this evening, Thursday, March 4th, 2021.

I was stopping in for a coffee at the Parsonage even before the current owners purchased the cafe. I remember the excitement when the ownership changed, the renovations were complete at the North Park St. location and there was talk of them roasting coffee on site. The roastery was a fairly innovative idea 15 years ago. It was welcomed and supported at the time as a first for Fernwood. And neighbours who saw the initial Fernwood Coffee bags on Thrifty's shelves were thrilled.



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I also remember when in 2018 the Parsonage was forced to relocate. Neighbours were very concerned that the cafe & roastery would have to leave Fernwood. We were delighted when the deal with Stan Thompson Upholstery on the Cook/Caledonia corner was struck. The neighbourhood turned out in numbers to support a parking variance for the 1105 Caledonia site showing such clear support for the Fernwood Coffee/Parsonage relocation that one of the City Councilors even remarked on how unique and special it was to hear that level of unified support for a business venture in the City.

I refer you to this history with a purpose. Because that level of support doesn't come to every business. It reflects the important place that Fernwood Coffee occupies in this community. It is more than a coffee shop and roastery. It is a locally owned and operated business that has served Fernwood well over the course of these past 15 years. Fernwood Coffee is at every community event, whether in Fernwood or North Park. The Parsonage space has hosted a myriad of community gatherings over the years. When anything is happening in the neighbourhood, Fernwood Coffee is among the first business approached for sponsorship or assistance, and they invariably come through. Fernwood Coffee also provides good employment to young people, most of whom live in Fernwood or North Park. They are our neighbours and having a comfortable place to gather where the faces are familiar, and the coffee is good matters. It matters a great deal.

So, it was with some consternation that I heard of the need for rezoning to retain the roastery at its current location. It doesn't take much business acumen to guess that the roastery operations are what was had kept Fernwood Coffee/The Parsonage afloat thru this 'Year of COVID'. After all The Parsonage was closed for some 6 weeks during the March/April 2020 lockdown. It has only been open for takeout service since that time. And even though the addition of great awnings and heaters has helped keep customers coming this winter and there are still line ups at times, it is pretty clear that The Parsonage may not have survived on its own.

So...what we have here is a locally owned and run business staffed largely by our neighbours that is hugely valued by the community it serves and has been innovative enough to survive the pandemic challenge when so many others have not. And we are here tonight to consider if that business should get the rezoning it requires to continue to do business as it always has done. To my mind, the question should never have been put. We should be doing everything possible to support our local businesses, including Fernwood Coffee, through this most difficult of times. Not challenging them with legal conundrums that can wait on more reasonable times to resolve. But if the matter must be raised, then it is to me a no brainer. Should Fernwood Coffee/The Parsonage receive the site specific zoning required for it to continue to roast and wholesale coffee as it has always done at its current location? Of course, it should.

The rezoning proposal has my complete support.

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This email is to express my support for the Parsonage Cafe. As a resident of the Fernwood area I frequent the Parsonage at least twice a week. It is a gathering place for friends and family and is perfect for safe, socially distanced visits during this public health crisis.

The Parsonage Cafe is a fixture of the Fernwood community and would be missed.

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I'm writing to let you and the land use committee know that I support the rezoning necessary to allow Fernwood Coffee/Parsonage Cafe to continue operations.

They are a great part of the local community and a business I patronize frequently.

I've been a resident of Fernwood for 13 years (though that might change if the boundary changes go ahead!) and really want to see Fernwood Coffee continue to operate in our neighbourhood.

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I'm writing to express my support for Fernwood Coffee and its bean-roasting enterprise. The cafe and its wholesale operation are staples of the community. I don't know the particulars of the zoning issue that's been raised, but I strongly encourage the LUC to do what it can to support this wonderful local business.

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[We] have been to both Little June and the Parsonage for coffee and breakfast bagels since moving here in spring of 2020. We are impressed with the sense of community that we observe and 'feel' as we make an order and wait for the call that it is ready.

As seniors we are impressed with all the young people and their children and dogs mingling around and talking about "stuff". That is an essential consequence of the availability of places to gather.

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I recently heard that there was a zoning issue with the Parsonage Cafe because of its roastery. I have lived in Fernwood for 7 years and the Parsonage is a super important part of the neighbourhood for me! I very much support rezoning.

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I'm writing this in support of Fernwood Coffee Company. [I live on] Caledonia Ave. I purchased my property before Fernwood Coffee Company/ Parsonage cafe opened. I've seen the neighbourhood change in the most positive way from their presence. They provide an amazing service and sense of community. My grandparents lived on this block of Caledonia for over 50 years so I've spent my whole life watching this neighbourhood change. The distribution part of Fernwood Coffee is streamlined and respectful. I'm aware of complaints from a close resident about idling trucks, residential parking used, loud noise, odour from roasting, etc. What about odours from little Thai Place? Many people park on Caledonia to go to Logan's Liquor store, the yoga studio above that, or one of the many businesses in that area. I'm in full support of allowing Fernwood Coffee Company to have a bylaw amendment to allow them to carry on with the great service they provide.