



James Bay Neighbourhood Association

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Victoria, B.C., Canada

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September 19th, 2016

Mayor & Council,
City of Victoria

Re: CALUC Community Meeting - 345 Quebec St – Harbour Towers

The community meeting to consider the 345 Quebec St (Harbour Towers) proposal with was held on September 14th (71 attendees). Attached please find an excerpt of the General Meeting minutes regarding the proposal.

Meeting participants expressed both positive and negative opinions on the project; however, a distracting, but not directly related, issue dominated, namely long-standing and worsening traffic issues associated with traffic loads on Oswego and Superior.

Positive comments included the significant addition of rental units to the housing stock in James Bay and the innovative repurposing of the hotel. Negative comments, in the main, referred to the parking shortfall.

For your consideration,

Marg Gardiner,
President, JBNA
CALUC Co-Chair

Cc: Doug Vincent, Principal, OMICRON
Ivica Marinic, Architect, Principal, AIBC
CoV Planning

EXCERPT from JBNA September 14th, 2016 Minutes

**JAMES BAY NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION
MINUTES - General Meeting September 14th, 2016 – 71 present**

6. Development Proposal: 345 Quebec Street CALUC Harbour Towers rezoning

Doug Vincent, Principal, OMICRON

Ivica Marinic, Architect, Principal, AIBC

Marg Gardiner reported on the Development Review Committee (DRC) pre-meetings:

April 18: Tim VanAlstiine, Trevor Moat and Marg Gardiner met with Mssrs Vincent and Marinic to discuss the future of Harbour Towers and preliminary drawings for a residential complex; however, property owners had not yet determined the direction for the complex.

Initial concerns raised include: Parking; Size of smallest suites and storage for residents; Street façade particularly on Quebec Street.

August 22: Wayne Shillington, Tim VanAlstiine, Trevor Moat and Marg Gardiner met with Mssrs Vincent and Marinic to discuss the proposal. Changes made included a more inviting “residential” façade along Quebec Street, and further definition of suites and parking.

Concerns raised include: Parking was still very low at about 0.75; Discussions revolved around possible ways of addressing the parking issue including fewer suites and redesigned bicycle parking and car-share.

Community Meeting presentation:

Building currently zoned transient residential – hotel – want to rezone to residential for rental apartments. Built in 1972 originally as a rental building but changed to a hotel. Much of the building is as originally built – no major upgrade in last 20 yrs. Extensive work will be required to rejuvenate the building to extend its life expectancy for another 30 yrs.

Current residential rental vacancy rate in Victoria 0.6%. 24% of condo in GVRD are rentals.

Propose 219 suites, with 219 bike stalls and 179 car stalls and with storage spaces for all 219 suites (larger suites will have in-suite storage, while smaller suites will have storage areas in the parking levels of the building).

Will be stripping building down to bare concrete. Building envelope will be replaced, windows, no major change to most of building façade other than exterior colour.

Questions/comments:

Q: Will there be a children’s playground

A: No

Q: Cook St village resident: will be building to code, seismic upgrade?

A: Will do as close as possible – however there are some things that can’t be address – no seismic upgrade required.

Q/A priority to those who live within 100m of 345 Quebec

Q: Near-by Polo Pacific resident: Polo has the greatest number of residents closest to Harbour Towers and since the Strata AGM same night, many residents could not attend. Is the 24 space parking lot to west included in total count of parking spaces?

A: Yes, will include visitor parking

Q: Will banners or bright lights remain on building – current Harbour Towers sign creates is a problem with Polo residents?

A: Can’t answer at this time, hadn’t considered it. Now aware of issue.

Q: Will you use 24 stall parking space for construction material, supplies, vehicles?

A: Doesn’t know earliest possible construction would start in 2017. These decisions would be made by others if project proceeds.

Q: Near-by resident: Units from 285 sq ft, is this less than current by-law requirement?

A: Doesn’t know what current requirement is

Q: Near-by resident: What is target demographic?

A: There is no target demographic – open to anyone who wishes to rent

Q: 268 Superior resident: what is time line?

A: Hasn't made an application to City for a development permit as yet, earliest possible fall 2017 with a building out over 20 months.

Q: Near-by resident: What will be the rental rates?

A: Market

Q: Near-by business Oswego Hotel: Where will courtyard be located? What will we see?

A: What you see now is the windows along the wall facing the Oswego. The windows will be filled in and you will see a flat roof. The entrance to the open courtyard will be off the entrance to the parkade, near the Oswego Hotel.

Q: Near-by resident: will there be condos?

A: No, proposal is all market rentals

Q: Near-by Kingston St resident: Amount of parking doesn't seem to be sufficient. Impact on employment from hotel to rental – what will happen to those employees?

A: Parking was identified as an issue when we met with the JBNA committee. Off-street parking is an issue but is an existing building and there is only so much space and has to be shared with bike stalls and storage spaces. Proposal now suggests parking at 0.81. City will be making changes and now suggesting 0.78 will be set for James Bay.

Q: Near-by Quebec St resident: traffic flow – the intersection is very busy – very concerned about the increase in traffic from the building. Any thought for an entry entrance to be relocated? (Also a problem with no stop signs at Oswego/Quebec)

A: It's not possible to change access to the underground parking on this existing building.

Q: Near-by Oswego/Superior resident: Has construction fatigue – feels presentation is vague would appreciate if made a presentation that really understands community.

A: Would agree to differ.

Q: Near-by Pendray resident: What is the number of 1 & 2 BR suites?

A: < 300 sq ft x 20, 350-425 sq ft x 40, everything else will be 1 & 2 BR plus penthouse units

Q/A open to those further away from notification area

Q: Toronto St resident: Commend proposal - will add a large number of rental units

C: Superior St Resident: Moved recently to Victoria from Ottawa. Have seen many development proposals - this proposal is one of best have seen – innovative proposal - will add a large number of rental units - seismic upgrade wouldn't be feasible.

C: Near-by resident: Will not miss [sport] team buses and other negative transportation experiences will not be missed from Harbour Towers – welcomes rental

Q: Concerned won't address moderate incomes. Will there be an asbestos addressed?

A: There is a requirement under law to contain asbestos removal – will be done.

Q: Is there a possibility of a roof top garden?

A: No, but have talked about community gardens in the courtyard area

C: Oswego resident: concern about traffic but supports the conversion to rental; may not be Affordable housing but may free up some rental stock elsewhere in the area.

C: Pilot Resident: Has spent a considerable time in the hotel for meetings. The building is tired and the proposed reuse is very positive, and will add needed rental units.