

Mavrinac and Wellington development set to move forward

Proposals to transform two blocks of land at the south end of Mavrinac Boulevard at Wellington Street East are set to take a significant step forward this week.

Council, at the Committee level, gave the preliminary green light to several amendments to the Town's Official Plan when it comes to density.

Should the proposal come to pass, the blocks at 20 and 25 Mavrinac will come to house a six-storey supportive housing building for seniors, 37 single detached homes and 209 townhouse units.

Last week's General Committee meeting was not the first time the proposal had been before Council and the public. Concerns raised at previous Public Planning meetings by residents and Council alike related to both density and the height of the planned seniors' residence in relation to the surrounding community.

These concerns promoted a number of revisions to the plan which were presented on June 15.

"The Official Plan is intended to amend the designations that currently exist, which are Business Park, in two ways: the lands adjacent to the existing community will be amended to be a low-medium density residential designation and the interior lands will be amended from Business Park to medium-high density," said Don Given, a consultant retained by the landowners.

Among the changes on the table, he said, was a change from the previously-planned lot sizes from 38 feet to 42 feet addressing density concerns from residents, reconfiguring some of the proposed homes a further distance from existing dwellings, and ensuring the multistorey building had a minimal impact on the views from the north side of Kane Crescent.

"Nobody will see the apartment building from the north side of Kane," said Mr. Given. "It is not an imposing building and will not become an intrusion into the neighbourhood visually. [This] is a genuine effort on the part of my client to fit into the neighbourhood. We have responded to the concerns raised by the neighbours."

Although no neighbours delegated to General Committee to voice their concerns, some were offered by Council members – particularly Councillor Wendy Gaertner who questioned both the density and the parking allocation in the area.

"Part of this development is going to be quite intense," she said. "We have seen that we have had parking and traffic problems with this kind of development, in particular behind Town Hall. We're talking about parking standards."

Another issue identified by Councillor Gaertner was a perceived shortage of parkland compared to the number of people who will call this area home once complete.

"The number of people who live there, the dense housing, the park needs to be much bigger. I know there are bigger parks in the area, but this is going to be the neighbourhood park and we would not be serving our future residents well to give them [so small] a park," she concluded. "I probably won't be on Council when the residents are living in these homes. I predict that a lot of people are going to be very unhappy and they will be coming to Council with their complaints. I know we are supposed to be doing intensification, but to me this is way too intense development and I just think it is wrong."

In the end, Councillor Gaertner and Councillor John Gallo voted against the plan.

Although Councillor Rachel Gilliland voiced issues with on-site snow storage, she ultimately said the plan was good for Aurora.

"I look at this as much-needed housing," she said. "We need to grow and having nice 40-foot lots adjacent is probably better than

backing onto a department store with lights? and all that noisy stuff we don't want to have at 3 a.m. I think it is great. I like the sight line adjustment.?

By Brock Weir Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter