

Planned six-storey retirement home at Mavrinac and Wellington could get extra floor

A planned six-storey retirement home for the northeast corner of Mavrinac Boulevard and Wellington Street East could rise to seven storeys, should a revised application before Council last week be accepted at a future Public Planning meeting.

The proposal in question was back before local lawmakers at last week's planning session.

While the bulk of the plan remains similar to what was first before Council in 2021, proponents behind the build are asking for a reduction in the number of parking spaces required, as well as the additional storey. Although with tweaks made elsewhere within the building plan would mean this extra storey would result in a height addition of just two metres.

“Since the sites were approved, the Town updated their Official Plan in 2024, and there's some changes affecting the Wellington Street corridor, one of which is to permit seven-storey buildings at key or gateway intersections,” said Joan McGregor, a consultant who presented to Council on behalf of the builder. “The proposed changes are an increase in building height, a change in the unit mix to increase the number of independent regular apartment-style units, decreasing the units with smaller kitchen areas, with a net change of 26 units overall. There is also a small reduction in parking requirements being proposed.

“The density is already within the range and the proposed amendment is consistent with the Town's Official Plan.”

All told, the proposed plan covers a total of .77 acres with a lot frontage of 83.43 metres.

It's set to include 49 apartment suites for an overall total of 229 units. 186 parking spaces are planned, with 17 bicycle spaces allotted.

24 of the 229 units will be designated as care facility units within the building so residents can age in place.

Councillors voted to receive the comments and recommendations presented last week, referring them to a future Public Planning meeting for further deliberations based on questions and concerns raised on June 3.

Issues raised included the impact of the revised height of the proposal, with Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo suggesting a shadow study be carried out, and, from Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner, how the proposed number of parking spots would be allocated, particularly for visitors.

“The last thing people want is overflow parking on their street,” she said.

Ward 6 Councillor Harold Kim, however, said he canvassed neighbours about a month ago, and said based on the feedback he received from nearby residents, the application was essentially good to go.

“Many understood that seven storeys is part of our Official Plan,” said Councillor Kim. “They didn't have any concerns with the additional height. They do understand also that there's a trend towards seniors wanting to retire in the place where they live, and so they understand we're seeing more and more of these retirement homes within low rises.

“A couple of concerns that did come out as I was door-knocking and I put out the communication was just the constant dust and dirt as you would expect when there's construction.” As such, he said, residents requested more frequent street cleaning during construction so there's no disruption in allowing their kids to play on the street.

Councillor Gaertner said she was “glad” to hear Councillor Kim's feedback as, when this proposal was first before Council, residents were in “an uproar” that the land in question was changed from commercial to residential.

?The residents who were buying in this area were expecting some kind of low-rise there, so? this was very poorly received with the residents, but I'm glad to hear they've gotten used to the fact??.? she said.

Responded Mayor Tom Mrakas, ?I remember that discussion quite vividly?that we discussed the fact that if it was an office, they could have built seven-storey buildings on that, so it was basically a choice: did you want seven-storey of this or seven-storey of that? I think at the time we were looking at the fact we were going to get some residential that complemented the existing area already, and I think that's once the residents realized that we were able to move forward in a positive way.?

By Brock Weir