



PUBLIC MEETING-2020-0002

20 Ransom Street (Acton)

Application to permit the development of 10 two-storey townhouse units to be accessed by a private laneway.

Minutes of the Public Meeting held on Monday, September 14, 2020, 6:25 p.m., in the Council Chambers, Town of Halton Hills, Town Hall, 1 Halton Hills Drive, Halton Hills.

Mayor R. Bonnette chaired the meeting.

Mayor R. Bonnette advised the following:

The purpose of this Public Meeting is to inform and provide the public with the opportunity to ask questions or to express views with respect to the development proposal. The Councillors are here to observe and listen to your comments; however, they will not make any decisions this evening.

As the Chair, I am informing you that when Council makes a decision, should you disagree with that decision, the Planning Act provides you with an opportunity to appeal the decision to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal for a hearing, subject to Tribunal validation of your appeal. Please note that if a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or written submissions to the Town of Halton Hills before the decision is made, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision of the Town of Halton Hills to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal. In addition, if a person or public body does not make oral submission at a public meeting, or make written comments to the Town of Halton Hills before the decision is made the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal, unless, in the opinion of the Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to do so. You may wish to talk to Planning staff regarding further information on the appeal process.

The Planning Act requires that at least one Public Meeting be held for each development proposal and that every person in attendance shall be given an opportunity to make representations in respect of the proposal.

The format of this Public Meeting is as follows:

- The Town will generally explain the purpose and details of an application;
- Next, the applicant will present any further relevant information, following which the public can obtain clarification, ask questions and express their views on the proposal.

The applicant and staff will attempt to answer questions or respond to concerns this evening. If this is not possible, the applicant and/or staff will follow up and obtain this information.

Responses will be provided when this matter is brought forward and evaluated by Council at a later date.

SPECIFIC PROPOSAL

This Public Meeting involves an application by This Public Meeting involves an application by Sovereign Ransom Street Company to amend the Town of Halton Hills Official Plan and Town of Halton Hills Zoning By-law 2010-0050, as amended, to permit the development of 10 two-storey townhouse units to be accessed by a private laneway.

TOWN'S OPPORTUNITY

The Chair called upon the Town's representative, Greg MacDonald, Senior Planner, to come forward to explain the proposal.

G. MacDonald advised that the public meeting is being held to provide a summary of the proposed amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law 2010-0050 by the applicant Sovereign Ransom Street Limited, for 20 Ransom Street, Town of Halton Hills (Acton), to permit the development of 10 two-storey townhouse units to be accessed by a private laneway.

A Public Meeting is required for an Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment under the Planning Act. This Public Meeting is being held in accordance with the Mayor's Task Force on Public Engagement and the Public Engagement Charter.

The subject location is located on the south side of Ransom Street in Acton, Main Street south is located just to the east, which is the main Regional Road into Acton. The property is rectangular in shape with approximately 34 metres of frontage on Ransom Street and approximately ¼ of a hectare of lot area.

The surrounding land uses are single detached dwellings on the opposite side of Ransom Street that front onto Adams Court, single detached dwellings to the east, and a place of worship at the corner of Ransom and Main Street. To the south is a large townhouse complex on Kingham Road and to the west a three storey apartment building.

The development concept proposal is for 10 two storey townhouses on a private access driveway. Each unit would have two parking spaces and an additional three visitor parking spaces are provided for the development. Each unit would have a private rear yard or amenity space at the back of the units, with privacy fencing surrounding the development.

If the development applications are later approved then site plan control applications will also be required. G. MacDonald provided a rendering of the townhouse units noting that the end unit closest to Ransom Street would front onto Ransom Street, while the driveway and parking would be internal to the site.

The subject lands within the Halton Hills Official Plan are currently designated low density residential area, this designation does not permit townhouses and caps density at 15 units per hectare. The official plan amendment therefore proposes to re-designate the subject lands as medium density residential area. The medium density residential area designation allows for 21-50 units per hectare of land, this proposed density is approximately 37 units per hectare. The amendment to the official plan would allow the townhouses at the proposed density, with regard to the Town of Halton Hills Zoning By-law the subject lands are designated low density residential

one or LDR1-1 in the neighbourhood overlay, this zone does not permit townhouses. The zoning by-law amendment proposes to rezone the subject lands from a low density residential one zone to a medium density residential two zone, which will permit townhouses.

Additional site specific modifications that are currently identified pertain mostly to a reduced setback from the front lot line and a reduced setback to the rear lot line.

With regards to the first circulation of the submission to agencies and departments for review and comment, the first submission comments have been received and some comments will need to be addressed in order to properly evaluate the proposal before a recommendation report can be presented to planning committee. These comments include:

- Information needed to review compatibility with the abutting land uses
- Revisions and clarifications to the traffic impact study
- Some additional and further grading and stormwater management information

Public comments to the initial public notice mailing include three emails with public comments and one phone call. Since that time two additional written correspondences have been received and forwarded to Council.

Public Comments include the following questions/concerns:

- Concern with built form to the existing mature neighbourhood
- Tree loss
- Construction impacts (noise, dust, etc.)
- Increased traffic congestion and parking pressures
- Impacts from the storage of garbage
- Snow storage melt impacts onto adjacent vegetation
- Lack of greenspace/outdoor amenity
- Could the development exacerbate water main issues

These comments and all others received will be reviewed by town staff and addressed through further review of the applications prior to the recommendation report. However it should be noted with regards to the concern over garbage storage, the Region of Halton has confirmed that the townhouses are eligible for individual curb side collection in front of each unit. With regards to construction impact, at the required site plan application stage of development a construction management plan is mandated, which provides for mitigation of certain impacts.

The applicant is also required to provide a traffic impact study. A tree preservation plan has been submitted and is under review and earlier as note a private amenity space has been provided for each unit.

A Public Information Centre hosted by the applicants was held on October 30 2019 at the Dufferin Rural Heritage Centre in Acton with regard to the subject lands. The information centre was attended by town staff and approximately 15 residents. At the time of the Public Information Centre the proposal was for a 15 unit four storey stacked townhouse development, both comments by staff and resident's concerns resulted in the applicant revising the proposal to what it is today.

Next steps for staff include review of the second submission upon receipt, work through identified issues from staff/agency comments and comments from members of the public and a final report to Council on the disposition of this matter.

APPLICANT'S OPPORTUNITY

Mark Condello Planner for Glen Schnarr and Associates representing the applicant Sovereign Ransom Street Limited came forward.

M. Condello advised that the applicant hosted a community information meeting back in October 2019 on the development of these lands and this meeting was held well in advance of any application being submitted. A more intense built form was presented at that meeting and from that meeting they did receive some good feedback from the residents on the height, density, parking and other perceived impacts to the neighbourhood. From that meeting they did take back the feedback and revise the proposal to what is before the public today, that proposal being for ten two storey townhouses on a private road.

M. Condello stated that the applicant is of the opinion that this proposal represents a sensitive infill development, while providing an efficient use of an underutilized parcel of land. This property was identified in the Town's recent residential intensification opportunities study update, reviewed by Council back in June. This site has already been identified as a potential area for intensification and what this proposal does is provides a sensitive intensification of the site.

In terms of the application a number of technical drawings and reports were submitted for the proposal that are now being reviewed by staff and comments have been received on the matter. Some items were identified by engineering staff that need to be clarified or further information is to be provided, all of which will be addressed in a second resubmission, which is anticipated to be filed shortly after this meeting. Mr. Condello and the applicant are looking to get Council's input on the application as well as to hear from area residents before proceeding on filing a second resubmission.

PUBLIC'S OPPORTUNITY

The Chair asked if there were any persons online that have questions, require further clarification or information or wish to present their views on the proposal to come forward.

Sean Thompson, 16 Adams Court

Mr. Thompson submitted a Youtube Video in advance of the public meeting and requested that it be played in lieu of his speaking at the meeting. The video was played.

The Youtube Video expressed concerns with respect to parking, garbage and snow removal issues that will result from this development.

Carolyn Elston- Ryder & Craig Ryder – Owners of property that backs on to the east side of the proposed development

C. Elston-Ryder stated that there was mention of a meeting that took place on October 30, 2019 that actually shut down almost an hour and a half early and therefore all residents were not able to attend. She stated that she feels that this is a reflection of how this company has moved forward and has almost tried to bully the residents of the neighbourhood by shutting the meeting down early, sending letters from lawyers and not addressing the resident's concerns.

Mrs. Elston-Ryder stated that she is concerned about the loss of privacy and continuity of the neighbourhood. She stated that they moved to Acton because they do not wish to live in that type of medium density housing, though from her perspective she would consider it high density.

Mrs. Elston-Ryder noted that as we move through the pandemic it has become evident that this is not the type of housing that is desired or desirable for any growing community. People need greenspace and need to be able to have their own greenspace. The allotment referred to is 7 foot, which is an average size NBA player between the back of the proposed townhouse that will be located behind them and her back fence. She stated that if the resident of the townhouse were to swing open their door, (which the average door swing is 3 feet) and were to trip and fall they would literally hit their back fence.

Mrs. Elston-Ryder stated her concerns about the loss of greenspace, loss of mature trees, the eco system, snow removal, noise, loss of privacy and loss of enjoyment of their property. She raised concerns raised about traffic on Highway 25, only refuge they have is their back yard and this development will alleviate any kind of refuge that they have.

Mrs. Elston-Ryder requested clarification about the privacy fence mentioned in the presentation.

Ben Westwood, 14 Adams Court

B. Westwood stated that he disagrees with the proposal for 10 townhomes. He stated that he has concerns with regard to the current parking situation and with the addition of the townhomes there would be no parking on the street at all. He also noted that he would expect that these townhomes will have children living in them and there is no place in the area for the kids to play. He expressed concerns about the loss of mature trees and the general down grade of the whole neighbourhood if these homes are not maintained.

Alex Wright, 6 Adams Court

A. Wright agreed with the previous speakers and stated that the proposal seems almost ridiculous and unfair to the residents who purchased their home in a quiet neighbourhood. Now to have 20-30 residents injected in to this small space that they are currently already struggling with. He stated that for the record he is strongly opposed to a change to this by-law.

Dr. Jeffrey Stoltz, 26 Adams Court

Dr. J. Stoltz referred to his correspondence he sent to Council on September 10, 2020 in which he outlined the various sections and subsections where the proposed development is in contrast to the guidelines set out in the Official Plan for the Town of Halton Hills and he strongly recommends that Council declines both the Proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments.

Dr. J. Stoltz referred to his letter and the various ways that the proposed development is not compatible with the surrounding area with respect to height and density, as the homes in the area are on large lots and are low density. He noted that the request for further amendments to reduce setbacks further shows the incompatibility to the existing neighbourhood.

Dr. J. Stoltz highlighted the concerns expressed in his letter to Council with respect to traffic congestion on the surrounding streets that will create an unsafe situation for residents of the area and the issues with parking.

Dr. J. Stoltz noted the lack of amenities within a safe walking distance of the neighbourhood and the lack of amenity area for the area and the reduced private amenity space proposed for the individual townhouses.

Dr. J. Stoltz stated that further intensification in the neighbourhood is not sustainable for the area. He stated a counter proposal would be two townhouse units with a maximum of four units would satisfy the objections raised and serve to enhance the neighbourhood and provide adequate parking, space for amenities for the residence to be aligned with the Official Plan for Halton Hills and the residents of the community.

(Dr. J. Stoltz letter dated September 10, 2020 is on file in the Planning Department)

Michael Williton, 2 Adams Court

M. Williton agreed with the previous speaker's comments and concerns. He objects to the proposed development as his residence is right next to the proposed development, He stated that this development will cause a lot of congestion and a lot of issues with respect to construction and privacy. This development is not feasible and it is laughable that that the back yards are postage stamps. Parking alone is problematic and the traffic on the road is quite noisy as it is and the proposed development will add to that. He stated that he officially protests the amendment.

Courtney Larmand, 28 Adams Court

C. Larmand stated that she already submitted a letter to Town Council highlighting issues such as parking, now removal and the rezoning of the property to medium density. She stated that she just wanted to also officially object verbally to the proposed rezoning.

C. Larmand stated that parking is an issue in the area and with the number of children already

living on Adams Court it would be dangerous to allow this development.

Responses:

M. Cordello addressed the comments/questions of the speakers.

With regard to the concerns about lack of parking he stated that the parking proposed is consistent with the standards within the Town's Zoning By-law

With regard to the concerns raised about garbage pick up, the project is eligible for Regional pick up therefore there will not be a communal collection area for this proposal.

With respect to the concerns about the loss of mature trees, an arborists report was prepared and submitted and is being reviewed by town staff and tree removal will be consistent and comply with the Town's tree by-law and as part of the application a compensation plan will be reviewed by staff to that regard. As part of a site plan application a landscape plan will be provided that will look at landscape planting, to be done along the rear yard to mitigate any loss of privacy

With respect to the concerns about the size of the rear yards for the townhouses, the rear yards are proposed to be 7 metres not 7 feet, 7 metres is a standard size for a townhouse rear yard, that is 22 feet of amenity space per unit.

With respect to snow removal, that will be evaluated through a site plan application.

With respect to compatibility of the proposed, new built form along Ransom Street, it is compatible with the 3 storey apartment building to the west, as it will be a transition between the single dwellings along Main Street and the three storey apartment building

With respect the concerns about traffic, a traffic report was completed by the applicant and submitted to Town Staff for review. Additional analysis and clarification will be provided regarding this with the second submission.

With respect to the concerns/questions about privacy fencing, staff has already requested further details about the proposed privacy fence and the applicant will be providing that detail as part of their next resubmission. Typically these details are done through the site plan application process.

Second time Speakers:

Dr. Jeffrey Stoltz, 26 Adams Court

Dr. Stoltz noted that in the Noise Feasibility Study it states that road traffic noise exceeds the guidelines and asked how this would be addressed.

Dr. Stoltz also commented on the 12 mature trees that will be removed to permit this development.

Dr. Stoltz further commented that parking suitability is as per a medium density area and that this is not a medium density area.

Alex Wright, 6 Adams Court

A. Wright stated that he is strongly opposed to the proposal.

Carolyn Elston- Ryder

C. Elston-Ryder requested clarification as to when the traffic study was completed. She wished to ensure that it was not completed during COVID, as that would be an inaccurate representation of traffic.

Responses:

M. Cordello addressed the comments/questions of the speakers.

With respect to noise, the noise report provides recommendations with respect to noise exceedance due to traffic. The report is currently with staff for review, no comments or concerns received at this time.

With respect to the removal of the mature trees, an arborists report was provided and it does note that 12 mature trees will need to be removed for this development. Through the application process a tree compensation plan will be provided and is in keeping with the Town's By-laws. and there are ongoing discussion with staff

With respect to Traffic , a traffic study was prepared prior to April 2020, Mr. Condello said he will get confirmation from the traffic consultant of when the traffic counts were completed however he believes that they were done prior to any municipal shut downs prior to COVID 19. He will provide that clarification to staff.

FINAL COMMENT FROM STAFF

The Chair asked if there was any further information which Town Staff wished to provide prior to the conclusion of the meeting.

J. Linhardt stated that staff are taking detailed notes of issues/concerns raised by the residents. He assured the residents that all comments will be taken into consideration prior to any final report to Council.

CONCLUSION OF MEETING

The Chair declared the Public Meeting closed. Council will take no action on this proposal tonight. Staff will be reporting at a later date with a recommendation for Council's consideration.

If you wish to receive further information regarding this proposal please contact the Planner, Greg Macdonald, following the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Rick Bonnette

MAYOR

Suzanne Jones

CLERK