

Meeting Notes

Public Meeting on the Sydenham – Pearl Streets Brownfield Sites

November 25th, 2005

Polish Hall, 154 Pearl Street

7:00 to 9:00 P.M.

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Mike Quattrociocchi and Councillor Larry Kings.

The Councillors from Ward 2, John Sless and Stephen Lancaster were introduced. Other Councillors in attendance were Greg Martin and John Starkey.

Larry Kings asked who was in attendance that lived in Ward 2. Only one person raised their hand.

Councillor Mike Quattrociocchi provided a brief explanation of the various alternative development scenarios for 17 Sydenham Street, 22 Sydenham Street as well as the concept of moving Robert Moore Park to 22 Sydenham Street and the developing the park lands for housing. The new park at 22 Sydenham Street would be developed before the existing Robert Moore Park is closed. Councillor Mike Quattrociocchi explained that the concepts presented attempt to obtain the maximum yield of housing units from the lands while trying to have development that is compatible with the existing neighbourhoods. This is important to minimize the public investment required. It was also explained that affordable housing did not mean subsidized housing. Actually affordable housing would be representative of the neighbourhood. He further pointed out that the plans presented were merely concepts and that the purpose of this meeting is to present them to the neighbourhood and to find out what is acceptable to the neighbourhood.

It was noted that Robert Moore Park was developed in the early 1970's and that houses were demolished to create the park site.

There was a question as to whether Victoria Park School would re-open as an elementary school. Councillor Kings replied that small schools do not fit into the Ministry of Education school funding model and that it is unlikely that it will be re-opened as an elementary school. He indicated that the Scholl Board will be contacted to obtain information on their future plans for the Victoria School building.

A question was raised as to whether there was an overall vision for the area. Councillor Quattrociocchi indicated that the vision would be up to the neighbourhood. Any development will have to fit into the neighbourhood.

It was pointed out by a resident that the norm for the neighbourhood is low density residential development and that the apartment concept refers to high density development which is inappropriate for the area. A concern was also expressed regarding vandalism that may be associated with high density development. Low density

development comprised of single-detached and semi-detached housing is more appropriate to the area.

Concerns were expressed about the adequacy of services in the area, sanitary sewer capacity, water, sidewalks, etc. The existing services can't handle the development contemplated. Councillor Quattrociocchi stated that the developer will pay to construct new services. Councillor Kings pointed out that development will improve the aesthetics of the area and will result in increased property tax assessment.

A concern was expressed that if Robert Moore Park was developed that the neighbourhood would never get the elementary school back. Councillor Quattrociocchi noted that grass doesn't generate taxes. The aim is to develop a land use that will fit into the neighbourhood.

A question was asked about the level of contamination on the properties. Matt Reniers stated that a Phase II environmental site assessment had been carried out at 22 Sydenham Street by the City but that he could not provide a list of contaminants at the meeting. However, this information can be provided. He also pointed out that a Phase II environmental site assessment will be carried out at 17 Sydenham Street after the existing buildings have been demolished. Until that investigation is completed the contaminants on the property is unknown. The information from the assessment can be made available.

It was noted that the School Board needs to be part of the plan. It was pointed out by a resident that vandalism in the area has increased since the Alternative Education Program moved into Victoria School.

It was stressed that any new housing built into the area has to be compatible.

It was asked if the railroad has seen the plans. Larry Kings responded that they had not seen the plans but that they will be consulted.

A question was asked as to the potential number of new residential units that could be built. This question could not be answered as it is dependent upon the ultimate plan that is acceptable to the neighbourhood and is chosen to proceed with.

Councillor Quattrociocchi stated that residential development will follow site remediation. He also stated that he would like to see the redevelopment occur all at once to minimize the disruption.

A sentiment was raised that Robert Moore Park should be left alone. If anything, it should be added to. Robert Moore Park was named after a former alderman and this should be respected. More families will mean more children and the potential to re-open

the school. The loss of the park would make the school more difficult to re-open. Why not develop the Northern Globe site instead.

Larry Kings stated that a new plan, with lower residential densities will be prepared based on the comments made at this meeting.

A neighbourhood resident pointed out that the concepts would bring about real changes to the neighbourhood. Why get rid of the jobs from the old industrial sites? The sites should have industrial and commercial uses that provide jobs for the neighbourhood. Councillor Quattrociocchi asked those in attendance what uses they would like to see developed on the lands. The majority wanted to see the lands redeveloped for residential purposes. However, there was no support for apartment development. New housing will help to beautify the area. This is an opportunity to mold our community.

It was pointed out that the redevelopment would provide an opportunity to square off the lots on Richmond and Pearl Streets that back onto the former Crown Electric property.

A question was asked about how this project would be paid for. Matt Reniers briefly described the application that has been submitted to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Green Fund Program. Essentially, a loan would be obtained and paid for by the increased assessment generated by the development. There is also a possibility that a portion of the loan may also be a grant.

It was pointed out that the Pearl Street area already has enough affordable housing. What type of people will move into the new homes? Councillor Quattrociocchi replied that it will depend on the type of housing constructed.

It was pointed out from a owner of property in the area, that the railway lands are a conduit for vandals. Vandalism will increase if open space is developed behind homes on Pearl Street. Instead the park should be on the Crown Electric property and the Northern Globe property developed for a seniors apartment project.

It was also noted that Victoria School could be converted to residential apartments like the former St. Anne's School. There is already enough rent-geared-to-income housing and halfway homes in the area.

In response to a question, it was noted that the former Mott's property is still in industrial use.

The Councillors indicated that the concept would be revised based on the comments received. The handouts provided to all in attendance include copies of the concepts and a

questionnaire. The attendees were encouraged to fill out the questionnaire and to return them to the Planning Department.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 P.M.