

## Summary of Written and Oral Submissions

### Zoning By-law Amendment – 339-343 Gloucester Street

Note: This is a draft Summary of the Written and Oral Submissions received in respect of Zoning By-law Amendment – 339-343 Gloucester Street (ACS2020-PIE-PS-0082), prior to City Council's consideration of the matter on September 9, 2020.

The final Summary will be presented to Council for approval at its meeting of September 23, 2020, in the report titled 'Summary of Oral and Written Public Submissions for Items Subject to the *Planning Act* 'Explanation Requirements' at the City Council Meeting of September 9, 2020'. Please refer to the 'Bulk Consent' section of the Council Agenda of September 23, 2020 to access this item.

In addition to those outlined in the Consultation Details section of the report, the following outlines the written and oral submissions received between the publication of the report and prior to City Council's consideration:

#### Number of delegations/submissions

Number of delegations at Committee: 4

Number of written submissions received by Planning Committee between August 17 (the date the report was published to the City's website with the agenda for this meeting) and August 27, 2020 (committee meeting date): 5

#### Primary concerns, by individual

**Linda Williams** (oral and written submission)

- the proposal would create a tall building on small footprint, on an already dense block, a direct result of the City's policy of intensification
- intensification should be life enhancing, it should not diminish residents' quality of life
- in total, 66 households will be directly affected by this new building, and many more indirectly, at the cost of privacy and sunlight, increased noise, and traffic, less parking, more garbage collection and more deliveries
- encouraged the City to re-examine its policies on separation between buildings downtown, noting the distance between the south-facing units of her apartment building and the proposed new building will be approximately 50 feet, measured balcony to balcony, without the benefit of noise-reducing solid walls made of brick or siding, with big glass windows and sliding double

glass doors that will allow residents of both building to look directly into each other's' living spaces

**Jeff Rogers** (oral and written submission)

- proposed that this is wrong building in the wrong place at wrong time and followed that if it must be built, it should be built within existing rules
- it is disconcertingly unprofessional to provide notification to affected parties less than ten days prior to the meeting of the Planning Committee, and more than unprofessional that it tilts the playing field in favour of the developer, who has had months, considerable financial resources and expertise, and access to City officials while developing their proposal, as opposed to owners and residents of the community , who have been systematically kept in the dark during this period
- the community was last given a meaningful opportunity to comment and contribute at the meeting of October 23rd, 2019; repeated attempts to contact City staff since then resulted in no information provided other than being eventually told that the project was on hold and then this sudden shift to a positive recommendation having been sent to the Planning Committee for a decision in less than ten days from when the community was informed
- for the federal and other public servants who make up a disproportionate portion of the residents in this area, the short notice prior to the meeting means it is unlikely they will be able to take time off of work to be able to participate
- the Councillor for this ward does not sit on the Planning Committee but her voice should be given dutiful consideration as actually representative of the ward in question
- while it is a positive development that the developer has dropped their request for an amendment to the requirements for a rear setback, this is not seen as an 'act of good faith' or 'compromise'; the issue at hand is not for the community and developers to come to a compromise as this would only be the case if the building were being built within the existing bylaws and the only detriment were to the quality of life and aesthetics of the neighbours;
- the new owner of the property in question should have assumed existing by-laws to be the rules when purchasing the property and should not have audaciously assumed they would be granted amendments; setback and height exceptions provided for other developments should not apply to this one just because such exemptions have been granted in the past; any

request to deviate from existing bylaws is not a test of compromise with other parties, but should be a test of whether amendment of those bylaws serves a net public good - and further that this net public good exceeds any detriment to the existing residents; even at that, it would be reasonable that anyone so negatively affected would be compensated for the detriment

- no compensation is currently sought, but rather that any construction or development occur within the rules
- the requested by-law amendments are not necessary nor are they in the city's and its residents' interests; over-densification of the neighbourhood is not justified, nor private gain at public expense; any building on the property in question could be built within the existing bylaws and done so profitably; requests for amendments or exceptions to the bylaws would serve only to increase profit margins or reduce the amortization of expenditures; this is not justification for impositions upon existing owners and residents in the neighbourhood
- the owner/developer is a development company from India; if profits of foreign corporations are being put ahead of the interests of citizens and residents, this is not only bad in the media and public eye but fundamentally poor governance; even were it a domestic company, the interests of 'big property' being put ahead of existing residents is an attractive media cliché in its own right
- over-densification is detrimental to the vitality and quality of this residential area and the downtown core; the population density in the surrounding blocks will already be one of the highest in the city; the streets of this neighbourhood are already persistently dark and shady from tall construction; there is small, but necessary, respite provided by the bylaws which require minimum setbacks on all sides, including the street and rear
- the streets are also regularly dense with traffic, and illegal parking along that block of Gloucester is constant; the outcomes of limited parking included in this construction are naively optimistic, at best, without mentioning the irregularly narrow driveway
- proximity to transit is cited as reasoning, but the costly and much maligned O-Train should serve to mitigate against the densification argument; the O-Train permits for access to and from the downtown core for developments increasing population density in areas that currently have low density, and there is no need to continue to concentrate large residential buildings within the downtown core; densification should now be being applied outwards

along the OTrain as it is currently built and in the next phases; the approval of amendments for projects like this one in the downtown core effectively undermine the costly expenditures associated with the O-Train

- there is no 'public good' argument of any weight in allowing variance from the front, side, and rear setback requirements; these small gaps between adjoining large buildings are crucially important for the community, as they allow some small but crucial light, allow some small but crucial view, allow air to flow, and just aesthetically help keep the neighbourhood from feeling like an environment of oppressive concrete walls surrounding concrete streets
- the City's assessment of the proposal relies very heavily, perhaps exclusively, on the advice of consultants hired by the developer, which is a conspicuous conflict of interest; they appear to have little motivation to meet the needs of the City and its residents when their billing and salaries depend on a satisfied paying client
- the report to the Planning Committee minimizes and mischaracterizes the concerns of the community
- the units in this building are to be rental properties, not serving to increase the possibility of individuals or families to own or aspire to own their home; if it is a given that this building must be built, having it done within the rules would likely reduce the size of each rental and thus increase affordability
- the community has not ruled out collectively engaging legal counsel and pursuing options against the owner/developer, consultants, or City as there have been a number of questionable aspects to the development of this project and its handling

**Mandana Ghadaksaz** (oral and written submission)

- the developer is being granted site-specific exceptions to allow for reduced interior side yard setbacks, driveway/driving aisle width, and parking space length, which is most disappointing and has caused great concern among owners in her building whose properties will surely lose value
- the City is favoring a foreign developer's profit at residents' expense
- residents in her building will lose privacy due to the proximity of the building, and will be impacted by construction noise from 6:00AM - 10PM, especially with so many people working from home given the current pandemic
- it is unclear what the plan is for construction staging and how residents on Gloucester will access garages, given the fact Gloucester Street is one way

## **Sheilagh Gregory** (written submission)

- is not against intensification, but Ottawa can't support this kind of intensification right now, especially in this one block of Gloucester which has had two new high-rise buildings go up in the last few years
- downtown Ottawa does not work right now – it has very few amenities (no movie theaters, not many stores or restaurants, no entertainment) or things that people would walk to; most use a car to leave downtown for entertainment and shopping, and visitors and contractors often won't come because they find it too hard to find parking
- LRT will not change existing issues, as it isn't even working half the time or convenient to take at night or when carries goods/supplies
- there is already a shortage of parking downtown, with many people parking illegally, and putting up a new building with insufficient parking and no visitor parking is a mistake
- limiting urban sprawl doesn't have to be done in this one block
- intensification should be reconsidered in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, given it's not possible to social distance downtown; we need to allow each person a little more room, a little more space, or else downtown will become an underprivileged ghetto like in some Toronto neighborhoods
- zoning rules are there for a reason and there is no benefit (except to the builder) in amending them; the greater good is served by building within those rules and the profit factor for one builder cannot be allowed to outweigh the needs and rights of the neighborhood residents, particularly those already living who bought their units under a building code that would ensure their continued reasonable space, a code that has already betrayed them by changing the height allowance of those buildings on Gloucester

## **Primary reasons for support, by individual**

### **The applicant, as represented by Nico Church and Brian Casagrande, Fotenn** (oral submission and slides)

- provided site context, noting nearby highrise buildings and proximity to transit
- provided policy and zoning context, noting that highrise development would be permitted by the Central Area Secondary Plan, Official Plan and Zoning By-law

- detailed the requested amendments, including that they are not proposing to go beyond 64 metres in height; they are proposing only 12 parking spaces with 115 development because of proximity to LRT, and 149 bicycle parking spaces (more than 1 per unit)

**Effect of Submissions on Planning Committee Decision:** Debate: The Committee spent 30 minutes in discussion of the item

Vote: The committee considered all submissions in making its decision and carried the report recommendations with the following amendment:

Therefore, be it resolved that Planning Committee recommend to Council that the following changes be made to Document 2:

- Replace Section 1 with: “Rezone the property known as 339, 341, and 343 Gloucester Street, shown in Document 1, from R5Q H(64) to R5Q [XXXX] H(64)”;
- Section 1 becomes Section 2;
- In the fourth and fifth subsections of section 2 (b), replace “double traffic lane” where it occurs with: “two-direction controlled single traffic lane”

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that pursuant to the *Planning Act*, subsection 34(17), no further notice be given.

## **Ottawa City Council**

Number of additional written submissions received by Council between August 27 (Planning Committee consideration date) and September 9, 2020 (Council consideration date): 0

### **Effect of Submissions on Council Decision:**

Council considered all submissions in making its decision and carried the report recommendations with the amendment approved by the Planning Committee.