

To Stratford City Council:

It is my assumption that the report (which is secret as I write this) will recommend to the planning and heritage committee that the developer's revised proposal be approved, and that necessary zoning and Official Plan amendments be made.

Firstly, I am not a resident of the area. So I cannot be accused of Nimbyism, as my comments are not related to any impact on me or my property. However, there will be significant impacts on the adjacent residents. There will be almost no sunlight in the winter months, and instead of a neighbour's backyard, people will now have a 47 car parking lot as their immediate adjacency.

Normally, in low density residential areas of Stratford, residences expect the noise and light nuisance of vehicles to be in the front of their properties. The proposal will mean that a presumably lighted parking lot will be their back neighbour. This is a significant change. The lot will be plowed in winter, and the noise and lights from a plow will certainly be a nuisance they have not experienced before. Plows are expected in the front. Not in the back. And there is no provision of a location to put the snow, so it will need to be loaded onto a truck and trucked away, with all the noise and commotion, again in a backyard area. Again, a significant adverse effect. But perhaps the planning department has redefined significant adverse impacts to be only those impacts felt in spring summer and fall. That would require some stretch to do so.

Secondly, as a member of the Energy and Environment Committee, I was heartened by the decision of the Infrastructure, Transportation and Safety Committee to recommend a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by the city of Stratford by 2030. We have a little over 8 years to do that. Almost 50% of our emissions are in heating and cooling buildings. As the report of the climate change coordinator, also approved by the ITS committee, repeatedly noted, development works against that goal, unless that development is carbon neutral. This proposal certainly is not. It is not proposed to be a passively heated and cooled edifice, so presumably it will depend on Natural Gas, a fossil fuel to heat it. And a significant amount of electricity to cool it. The plans do not, so far as I can determine, stipulate its energy use.

Thirty-Nine percent of our emissions are from the use of internal combustion engines in our transportation sector. The plan is to eliminate those in favour of electric vehicles. But how can you do that if you do not provide places to charge those vehicles. There are no such plans in this development. The building code had been amended to force new developments to provide access for charging, but one presumes in a fit of pique, our Premier eliminated that requirement, presumably to give developers such as this one an easier ride in the near term.

And I note that the proposal is for asphalt paving on the parking surface. No porous surface here, as is recommended by environmentalists to minimize runoff. Anyone who saw the flooding at the golf course and in Devon Park a few weeks ago know that climate change means we have to pay attention to how much runoff we allow. This developer plans to use the cheapest method and let the city storm sewers deal with the runoff. Finally, as has been noted, this is not only a 'stable residential area', but it is a heritage corridor. I understand the attempt to preserve some of the look, by having pitched rooflines, but the effect of one or more large stacked townhouse buildings will certainly be different than the 2 storey detached dwellings of most of the rest of

the heritage corridor. Council should think long and hard about the look and feel of Stratford as people enter it. It wouldn't have been designated as a 'heritage' corridor, if there weren't some vision of a council in the past that the look and feel of entering Stratford was an important part of the character of the place.

Stratford is a tourist place. Tourists come, not just to see a play, but to feel and experience a heritage town.

This would be the first ever high density zoning in Stratford. At present there are no high density areas so zoned. The words of the policy suggest that high density zoning should be used in a transitional way, with a gradually increasing density around it to lessen the severity of the change. There is no such transition here. On all sides of this development are low density developments. There is no stepping into this with medium density around it. I understand the necessity, given the climate change emergency, to intensify the zoning and stop building sprawl. But it should be done in a thoughtful, planned way, not merely willy-nilly agreeing to any high density proposal that comes along simply because we need to intensify. I reiterate my warning of last time, that once this portion of a heritage corridor is zoned for high density, and the changes are made to the official plan to permit it, others will seek the same zoning on the same corridors. Council will be powerless to stop them. The Ontario Land Tribunal will examine this decision and declare that all stable residential areas on heritage corridors can be rezoned high density.

I urge council to reject this demand, and to examine the whole of the built form of Stratford, perhaps in the context of the upcoming Official Plan review, and thoughtfully place higher density developments in areas that make sense, with appropriate transitions from lower density, stable residential areas. I also urge that council heed the advice of the climate change coordinator and view all its decisions, especially planning decisions, with a climate change emergency lens, to ensure that we aren't baking in 50 or 100 years of emissions and other environmental issues into the next wave of building.

Mike Sullivan
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