

From: [Erwin Dreessen](#)
To: ["Willis, Stephen"](#)
Cc: ["Sheila Perry"](#); ["Jason Burggraaf"](#)
Subject: FW: [GA List] Secondary Plans at issue at Planning Committee, June 27
Date: June 29, 2019 9:20:00 PM
Attachments: [PC 27Jun2019 - Oblate lands - GA comments - v2.pdf](#)
[St Paul U letter to PIEDD re 10 Oblates - DOC240619-24062019113118.pdf](#)
[770-716 Brookfield - PC 27Jun2019 - ED submission.pdf](#)

Dear Stephen,

Last Thursday's Planning Committee was a dark day for all who believe in neighbourhood-based planning. As noted below, four items on the agenda turned on failure to respect the Secondary Plan of the respective neighbourhood.

Developers and their consultants must be held accountable for their role. Regional Group's in particular is galling in that its action signifies an undoing of constructive and fruitful dialogue with the community that had been built up over several years. The reason for this switch needs to be better understood.

But these behaviours were aided and abetted by the City's planners. Even during the period of positive relations regarding development of Greystone Village, I heard reports of an obstructive, rather than helpful role of the city planner. I heard similar stories during the development of the CDP for Kanata North ("Area 1"). In both instances there was more agreement between landowners/developers and communities than with city planners. Quite likely, these cases are not unique.

In the case of 770 Brookfield, this unhelpful behaviour went even as far as one of your senior planners proclaiming (repeated in the staff report, no less) that a zoning by-law trumps a secondary plan! This heretical statement came in defence of a twisted interpretation of "transition" that goes back as far as 2004.

Just to show that the planning department's culture of accommodation to developers' wishes is deeply ingrained. (That planners are known to often make life difficult for applicants is not a contradiction: Whereas towards communities planners tend to ignore or minimize concerns, towards applicants they are easily seduced into showing who's boss. The sometimes byzantine City or Provincial rules don't help either.)

Stephen, what needs to change is the planning department's culture. This will not be an easy task, is in part an expression of universal bureaucratic culture, and will not be accomplished in short order.

Planners should have it ingrained in them that their first and foremost duty is to serve the public interest. Where conflict arises between different interests, its prime task should be to mediate differences. To the extent differences remain, and if more than one option is legal and defensible, staff should not hesitate to provide Council with options. The differences are likely the result of alternative value preferences, in which case a political decision is more appropriate than a bureaucratic one.

As the four examples on Thursday demonstrated, that is not at all what happens now. One of the City's former senior planning managers once proclaimed at an FCA meeting that the planning department's clients were the developers. Maybe he was too blunt and lost his job for it but he did speak the truth, in practical terms.

Stephen, I believe that you believe in empowering neighbourhoods (though I confess that your endorsement of a unilateral change in the Secondary Plan to accommodate the development proposal for 900 Albert Street was a severe blow to my belief). You can make this transformation of the planning department's culture happen.

I am confident that large numbers of Ottawans devoted to the welfare of their communities share my desire to see this change in the role of your planners. Many also have a genuine desire to have reasonable conversations with developers about their plans for the community rather than hasty 'consultations' based on incomplete information and/or after the die is cast. All parties gain when power balances are maintained because, in the end, better decisions result.

Have an enjoyable Canada Day.

Erwin

P.S.: I haven't forgotten about your commitment to meet on a new protocol for development charges reviews.

Cc: Sheila Perry, Jason Burggraaf

From: green-news-request@greenspace-alliance.ca [mailto:green-news-request@greenspace-alliance.ca] **On Behalf Of** "Erwin Dreessen" (via green-news Mailing List)
Sent: June 27, 2019 10:43 PM
To: green-news@greenspace-alliance.ca; fca-planning-committee@googlegroups.com; 'Community Association Forum on Environmental Sustainability'
Subject: [GA List] Secondary Plans at issue at Planning Committee, June 27

Was it coincidence or is it a sign of the times? In each of the first four items discussed by Planning Committee today what was at issue was respect for the neighbourhood's Secondary Plan.

(Link: <https://ottawa.primegov.com/portal/#/agenda/7541?lang=en>)

Item 1 -- an amendment to the Secondary Plan and zoning for Greystone Village (the former Oblate lands at Main Street) -- occupied the Committee from 10 till 1:30 (with a half hour lunch break). On the surface, the issue was whether one building along the Grande Allée would be allowed to go to nine stories instead of the long-agreed six stories all along the block. The deeper issue was the sense of betrayal over what were thought to be inviolate plans achieved through years of dialogue and compromise. There is also the fear that it opens the door to similar applications later.

The Old Ottawa East community came out in force, filling the Champlain Room to overflowing, many wearing green t-shirts saying "Respect Approved Plans." Eighteen people spoke, all hammering on the same theme without, remarkably, repeating each other. Everyone spoke from their own perspective and experience.

Heather Jarrett, Paul Goodkey, John Dance, Phyllis Odenbach Sutton (OOECA President), Peter Tobin, Camrose Burdon, Barbara Kirk, Alexandra Gruca-Macaulay, Barry Davis, Peter Frood, Lorna Kingston, Karen Dufton, Ron Rose, Jeff O'Neill, Francine Leduc, [yours truly], Joel Harden (Ottawa Centre MPP), Rick Grimes: You are all heroes!

Listening to them took up one and a half hours. Several had prepared slides. Ron Rose played an audio of former chair Peter Hume at Planning Committee in 2012!

The Greenspace Alliance's modest contribution is attached. The rector of St. Paul's University sent in a letter opposing the application (also attached -- St. Paul's was not consulted though it owns much property on the other side of the Allée).

Defence by Alan Cohen, Barry Hobin and Murray Chown (together also strictly held to a total of 15 minutes) followed.

Motions by Ward Councillor Shawn Menard (not a member of the Committee) via Jeff Leiper would have undone allowing nine stories for that building on the Grande Allée but they came for nought, Leiper being the only one voting in favour. Ditto for a motion to limit the amendment specifically to the site of that building. The Committee then approved staff's recommendation, Clr. Leiper dissenting. This will go to Council on July 10.

It was the lead story on CBC Radio's local news with strong words from Clr. Menard on how he can no longer ask his constituents to participate in planning exercises because plans are not worth the paper they're written on.

Item 2 -- 258 Carruthers Avenue -- was pretty much the same story: In a letter Clr. Leiper read in the record, the Hintonburg CA protested the disrespect for the Secondary Plan and also argued that the imminent new R4 regulations are suffering the same fate before the ink is dry. The item passed but Clr. Leiper expressed hope that he could achieve a resolution before it is considered by Council on July 10.

For Item 3 -- 16 & 20 Hamilton Avenue North -- long time residents Wanda Gneau & husband and Linda Hoad (chair of the Hintonburg CA but she spoke in her own name) vigorously protested the "blatant disregard" for the CDP and SP for this area. No dice. Leiper dissenting.

Finally, on an issue in my own community (Item 4 - 716 & 770 Brookfield Road) I took to the microphone to protest, again (as I did for the first time in 2004; this is the third attempt to develop these two large parcels), the crooked interpretation of "transition" in the Secondary Plan for Riverside Park. (My submission is attached.) It too was of no avail. The proposal for six to nine storey buildings in between a potential of four storeys north of Brookfield (owned by Canada Post) and single family houses to the south was deemed to qualify as "transition" and approved by all members, including Ward Councillor Riley Brockington.

Afterwards, a man who had been sitting quietly in the back row all this time, approached me, telling me that he was told of the planned development on the day he bought one of these houses to the south, a year ago. He was deeply apprehensive about it all, having no clear sense about exactly what would happen. I replied that I had him in mind when I wrote my last paragraph (which I could not voice, having run out of time):

" Final point. The people most affected by this 9-storeys proposal are the residents of the nine houses to the south of the parcels. ... Has anyone knocked on the[ir] doors..., explained what, by law, they can expect, and asked them for their views? The Councillor's comments are silent on this, and there is no evidence in the staff report that they have been approached. Flyers don't count. "

He told me that Clr. Brockington did come to see him at some point. I am also told that the Riverside Park Community and Recreation Association has expressed support for the proposal, meaning that my efforts to enlighten its brand new Board

have borne no fruit. It's one fight I shall no longer fight -- 15 years is enough!

Media coverage -- all about item 1:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/oblates-greystone-residents-decrys-plan-changes-1.5192164>
(Kate Porter) - includes a video clip

<https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/community-fails-to-convince-councillors-to-block-taller-building-in-greystone-village> (Jon Willing)

<https://globalnews.ca/news/5437457/ottawa-residents-say-9-storey-building-okd-by-committee-will-destroy-community-plan/> (Beatrice Britneff)

Erwin

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