Community Association Letter

July 10, 2019

Re: Application Notice LOC2019-0090, 739 21st Avenue N.W.

Attention: Courtney Stengel

Mount Pleasant Community Association (MPCA) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments on this Land Use Amendment application.

Mount Pleasant is a neighborhood in the midst of transition. A significant number of older, original homes have been demolished and replaced with single family or semi-detached infills. This has served to revitalize our neighborhood as the population has risen and we see many young families moving in.

We have come to accept that we need higher density to bring the types of amenities, services and retail establishments we desire in our neighborhood. We are already seeing a significant density increase simply from the turnover of older bungalows on 50 foot lots to infill on 25 foot lots.

A few years back, our Planning, Transportation & Land Use (PTLU) Committee reached out to the community and hosted an all-day, open house, visioning exercise to gather feedback on the development of our neighborhood. At that event it was clearly expressed that our residents support higher density on the busier roads in our community (4th Street, 10th Street and 20th Avenue) but not throughout the rest of the community. We also feel this is good planning rationale as it will encourage redevelopment of these less desirable properties and the higher density redevelopment will have less impact on adjacent properties.

We took that resident perspective to our Board of Directors and then to our Annual General Meeting, where it was voted on and ratified by our membership as our official position. We have held to that position over the recent years and been supportive of a number of R-CG projects, seven that I can recall, along those three busier roads. Some of these are completed and occupied and some are still in development. We have also been involved in, and generally supportive of, a number of secondary suites and laneway suites in our community.

We have also been working with and supportive of Calgary Housing to develop an affordable housing project on 20th Avenue and 6th Street. We have not seen final plans yet but feel this is a good location for this type of project and look forward to it being completed over the next year. As you can see we are not opposed to higher density redevelopment.

We are opposed to the requested re-zoning of 739 21st Avenue NW from an R-C2 to an R-CG designation in principle because of the policy we have adopted, because it does not align with our current Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) and specifically because of the lack of appropriate engagement that the developer has conducted with local residents.

1. Policy

We have a very reasonable density policy based on solid planning rationale and supporting community desires. This policy has worked effectively to guide appropriate densification in our community. This application is in contradiction to this policy as it is not on a main road.

In the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) Mount Pleasant is defined as a Developed Residential Area., which recognizes the predominantly low density nature of and supports the retention of housing stock or moderate intensification in form and nature that respects the scale and character of the neighborhood. It

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also states that multi-family redevelopment should be compatible with the established pattern of development. This application is not consistent with the established pattern of development in the immediate and surrounding residential areas of our community, which are all single detached or semi-detached homes.

The subject property is not adjacent to existing or planned non-residential developments or multi dwelling development. The subject is also not adjacent to or across from existing or planned open space or park or community centre.

2. ARP

Our current ARP was put in place after comprehensive consultation between the community and the City. It was drafted with the desire to plan and accommodate for growth while preserving the unique community character of our neighbourhood. It is very dated, and from our understanding, the proposed R-CG land use did not exist when the ARP was enacted. A new land use like R-CG should not just be wedged into the ARP without similar consultation and collaboration.

The ARP discourages the re-designation of low density residential land to higher density residential in order to maintain and preserve the stability and character of the community. It also seeks to maintain the general development of the adjacent area. It states that townhouses may be appropriate on the edge of a low density area and not central to it and that their maximum height should be in the 9-10 meter range of the predominant R-C2 designation. This application is clearly contrary to these points and not in alignment with the ARP.

At this time this type of land use amendment is premature, given that the city has formed the North Hill Working Group and is in the middle of active consultation with community associations and residents. The intent of this work is to set goals and a vision for these communities with the intent of addressing and revising ARPs that are old and out of date. We have been actively participating in these meetings and look forward to a broad comprehensive plan leading to a revised ARP for Mount Pleasant.

3. Engagement

This is one of the first applications of this type in Mount Pleasant; high density within the tradition residential core of the community. There are no other high density row-house/townhouse developments in the community outside of the main streets and the community hub between 4th Street and 5th Street, from 22nd Avenue to 24th Avenue. A unique and ground breaking application like this requires extensive consultation and engagement with the community to fully explain the nuances of it, none of which has been offered by the applicant.

We look forward to working with the developer and the City to arrive at an appropriate form of development for this property within the existing R-C2 zoning, and not amending it to R-CG zoning.

These are not necessarily our final comments on this matter. We would like to be kept informed of any developments in this file, especially any amendments, so we can re-asses our position.

Sincerely,

Chris Best
Mount Pleasant Community Association Board Director
Planning, Transportation, & Land Use Committee Chair