

Your Worship, Councillors



My name is Jim Hughes. I am President of the Eau Claire Community Association and I appear before you on behalf of the Board of our Association and of the approximately 1700 residents of Eau Claire.

In overall terms our Association understands the motivation behind this proposal and we certainly support the basic objective of promoting activity and reducing high vacancy rates in the Centre City. These are difficult economic times for our city and anything which can help expedite development must be considered.

At the same time, the city core is not solely a business district but also includes a reasonably large residential population - people who want to enjoy the vibrancy of living downtown while still, understandably, want to have some say in how their communities develop and what services and amenities are provided there.

We have consistently been engaged in constructive dialogue about development in all of Eau Claire; we want to stay involved and we intend to stay involved.

We ask that you continue to provide us the same access to consultation opportunities as we have had.

*That will
work*

Our other concern goes beyond the specifics of developments along 2nd Avenue, to the larger symbolism of appearing to divide our community in two, with different rules and different opportunities for community engagement in the two parts.

A vital issue for me and for our association has long been promoting the development of Eau Claire as a distinct, integral and primarily residential community within the city centre - a community with identifiable boundaries and a distinct character, related to but separate from the commercial core.

That vision of Eau Claire is one set out in key planning documents and is one that I and some of my colleagues on our Board have spoken about before this Council in the past.

For this reason we were also encouraged to amend ^{see No. 16} the ^{mer} initially proposed Enterprise Area to exclude the communities of East Village and Chinatown. The rationale given for these ^{es} amendments ^{about} recognizes that both these communities have been the subjects of extensive community engagement and either have an ARP or one under development.

We are also encouraged that the same amendment would similarly exclude “most of Eau Claire” from the Enterprise Area, recognizing that “the majority of development in Eau Claire is primarily residential.” That of course reflects the intended character of Eau Claire as a “primarily residential community.” That intent is expressed in both the overall City Plan and the current ARP for Eau Claire, ^{and No. 100} which also was the subject of considerable community engagement – and one which our association strongly supports.

Our concern is simply with those words “most of” and the proposal in effect to divide our community in two for the purposes of this proposal, with that portion of Eau Claire south of 2nd Avenue falling in the Enterprise zone.

Even though much of the development south of 2nd avenue is office buildings, those buildings are adjacent to our residential buildings. The retail spaces in those offices will likely look to our residents for clientele and we will be affected by the activities in those spaces.

Our association takes an active interest in what goes on with development in this part of our community. Just last week I was writing, on behalf of our association, our comments on a DP application for change of use in a ground floor space fronting 2nd Avenue in precisely one of those office buildings. My understanding of this proposal is that in some cases, by removing the need for a DP applications, we could have fewer opportunities to comment on developments in this way.

In offering our comments, we are not obstructionist at all. We want to see development in those vacant space as much as anyone, probably more so. This, after all, is our home. But we do want the same opportunity to be consulted about and offer comment on developments in our neighbourhood as other communities in Calgary enjoy.

So, we urge you maintain our opportunities to continue to be part of engagement on developments in all , not just part of our community and protect the vision of Eau Claire as an integral community and exclude the whole, not just “most of” our neighbourhood from the proposed Administrative area.
