

Smith, Theresa L.

From: Ira Hanson-Ralph [ira.hansonralph@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 20, 2016 11:10 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: Mount Pleasant ByLaw 96D2106
Attachments: Mount Pleasant 96D2016 - Land Use Rezoning Application.docx

Good Evening,

I received a letter in my mailbox regarding "Mount Pleasant Bylaw 96D2016" as I own a property directly adjacent to the lots requesting an amendment to the existing Land Use Designation.

Attached is a copy of my concerns regarding the Notice of Public Hearing on Planning Matters. Please include my comments/concerns in the Agenda of Council scheduled for May 2, 2016.

Thank you,
Ira Hanson-Ralph
907 17th Ave NW

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Re: Mount Pleasant ByLaw 96D2106

I have owned the house at 907 17th Ave NW for 14 years. My property backs onto the development lots requesting rezoning.

I am in favor of the vision expressed in the Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP), and am looking forward to increased development along the corridor, both along 16th Ave N as well as mixed-used areas that integrate within the residential spaces in the area. ***I am not opposed to responsible development.***

I gained excitement as the 16th Ave widening project and ARP were being developed, as City planners, local community associations, and business developers worked hard on casting a ***bold, vibrant vision*** for the area that would balance the need of all stakeholders. To recap:

- City developers flew around North America identifying developments that expressed Calgary's vision and took pictures of vibrant mixed-use developments in other cities
- An ARP was developed with those pictures, along with guidelines that ensured a balanced yet bold vision
- The ARP was developed in accordance with Land Use Bylaw 1P2007; viable mixed-use developments can be achieved by following the ARP and 1P2007
- Stakeholders recognized that any constraints on the mixed-use lots - while rigorous - were intended to result in a ***vibrant destination where commercial and residential outcomes were harmonious***; there was no intent to deny commercial development
- Constraints on lots were intended to ensure ***high minimum standards were met*** in order to avoid the proliferation of poorly-conceived, cookie-cutter projects that were incompatible with the local surroundings
- Recommendations were made on how to work within the minimum standards to ***optimize density*** while ***meeting the ARP goals***; build the community, create a people-friendly public space, provide a route for diverse modes of travel (ARP, section 1.3)

The application to amend the Land Use Designation for land located at 836 and 912 16th Ave NW (Plan 1213510, Block 4, Lot 41 and Plan 1513006, Block 6 Lot 27) seeks to adjust the Floor Area ratio from 4.5 to 5.0. In order to achieve this, it is understood the developer would like to remove the requirement to adhere to minimum step backs addressed in the ARP and the Land Use Bylaw 1P2007. ***Removing or relaxing the step back requirements in order to achieve additional density is of great concern to me as an immediate neighbor.***

The intent of the step backs is to create inspiring buildings that contribute to the fabric of the surrounding community and avoid the type of massing that occurs when large featureless buildings are crammed into an area. Step backs allow for light penetration in to the community while also encouraging the creation of shared common spaces for building residents that accommodate landscaping features such as trees, bushes and flowers and are inviting spaces for residents to gather. ***Increasing density at the cost of removing those steps backs would be a real detriment to creating vibrant, inviting spaces that build community.***

As an immediate neighbor, you'd think I'd have an issue with the height of the proposed building or with a large second story common area staring down into my backyard, but I don't. I'm more concerned that by removing the step back requirements, the building will lose those common spaces where neighbors can congregate and socialize out in the open. I'm concerned that by losing step backs the building will fail to integrate as well with the community as it could, and be just another rectangular apartment box that is defining Calgary.

Our City planners envisioned so much more when they created the ARP, and I am hoping they remember those bold visions as they contemplate this rezoning application.

Impact	Land Use Bylaw 1P2007	Area Redevelopment Plan	96D2016 Proposed
Step backs	n/a	Min 3.0m back above 10m	0.0 step backs
<i>*By allowing 0.0m step backs, the building will reduce sunlight penetration into the surrounding neighborhood and not encourage the development of inviting shared spaces that build community.</i>			

Re: Mount Pleasant ByLaw 96D2106

My home is located at 907 17th Ave NW for 14 years. My home backs onto one the development lots requesting rezoning (912 16th Avenue NW) and is kitty corner from the other development lot (836 16th Avenue NW).

As time has progressed, and we have seen development in Mt. Pleasant, my level of concern is increasing exponentially regarding the height and the mass of the two development projects contemplated by the developer. Although I would deeply appreciate if the city council would reconsider reducing the height of these two buildings, today I would ask that the application to increase the Floor Area Ratio be denied. I would like to see the vision of the ARP be executed by having buildings that add to the character of the community – not to have buildings that go “straight up” from the ground level to the full height of the building. I would like original step backs to be kept as part of the plan. Two “boxy buildings”, particularly at the height of these two projects, will deeply affect the character of the community and the feeling you get when you are a resident or a visitor to the community. I feel like Calgary planners and architects can do something special to develop inner city communities such as Mount Pleasant, and I hope that this goal can be shared among all stakeholders.

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Thank-you for your time and consideration,

beth

Beth Hanson-Ralph

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