

WHAT WE HEARD

Summary of Feedback for Planning Application Case 22539 Rockingham South, Halifax

Public consultation was conducted through a mailout to neighbouring property owners and tenants. In the first week of November 2019, HRM postcards requesting comments and feedback on a proposal for a five-storey hotel were mailed to approximately 245 addresses within the notification radius. The postcards gave a brief overview of the proposal and directed interested parties to the HRM website where copies of the plans and letter of rational were posted. The postcards directed comments or requests for further information to the HRM Planning staff contact at the bottom of the card.

The applicant significantly changed their proposal following the first engagement period, so a second round of engagement was carried out. On December 4, 2020, a postcard requesting comments and feedback on a proposal for a five-storey hotel with commercial on the ground floor or a five-storey apartment building with commercial on the ground floor was mailed to approximately 243 addresses within the same notification radius. Again, the postcards gave a brief overview of the proposal and directed interested parties to the HRM website for copies of the plans. The postcards directed comments or requests for further information to the HRM Planning staff contact at the bottom of the card.

Because the first round of engagement sought feedback on a proposal for a five-storey hotel, which is still one option in the amended proposal, the feedback about the hotel has been included in this summary. Below are summaries of both the comments from the first and second round of engagement.

Summary of Feedback for the Five-Storey Hotel, November 2019

Ten (10) responses were received from the residents within the notification radius, three (3) phone calls, six (6) emails, and one (1) mailed letter. Of the feedback received four (4) were positive towards the proposal and six (6) were negative towards the proposal. Additionally, a petition signed by 24 residents of 30 Ruth Goldbloom Drive, Halifax was submitted to the Clerks office on November 18th, 2019 in opposition to the proposal. The petition outlined that the undersigned oppose the requested amendments and asked that the existing development agreement be maintained for a low rise commercial development.

The positive feedback was consistent between the four (4) received; there was no objection to the inclusion of the use or additional height. The feedback expressed that finishing the development would allow residents to begin enjoying the area and neighbourhood. One resident was curious to know the approximate timelines of the proposal and when the building would be

ready. Another resident had concerns around the intersection of Dunbrack Street and Ruth Goldbloom Drive, but no complaints regarding the proposed use or changes to the development agreement. One resident believed the design, form, and use will be a good fit on the site and looks forward to the development in the neighbourhood nearing completion.

The negative feedback focused on three main issues: traffic, height, and suitability. Of the six (6) comments received, three (3) raised concerns regarding traffic, four (4) brought up concerns regarding the height, and four (4) brought up concerns regarding the suitability of the use on the commercial site in the residential neighbourhood. The concerns around traffic related to the increase near the intersection, the increase of traffic to the traffic circle, and the speed of Dunbrack Street. Residents of the area have stated the intersection and traffic circle are both very busy and the additional traffic from this proposal, and the other properties under development, will make the situation worse.

Concerns relating to the height centred around the change between the existing permitted building height in the Stage 2 agreement versus the height of the hotel proposal. Residents who commented on the height stated they were told when moving into the neighbourhood the building would be a two to three storey local commercial building and are against any change to the existing proposed commercial building in the Stage 2 agreement. Concerns around suitability of the proposal are related to what has been advertised to go into that location, one resident noted there are already hotels available, responses noted a hotel is not needed for the area or appropriate for the residential neighbourhood and that a three storey or less commercial use should be on the site.

Summary of Feedback for the Five-Storey Hotel or Apartment Building with Ground Floor Commercial, December 2020 – January 2021

Ten (10) responses were received from residents during the second round of engagement. Two (2) respondents wanted clarification about what is being proposed. One (1) said they could not say whether they are for or against without knowing the tenants who will occupy the building, but noted the undeveloped site is currently an eye sore. One (1) wanted clarification but noted they had no issue with the proposed change, had supported the original proposal, but are looking for clarification about what would be built. Six (6) had generally negative feedback about the proposal.

The six (6) respondents with negative feedback cited different reasons for being against the hotel and the apartment building, including noise, traffic, blocked views, transient population (hotel), and suitability. Three (3) said they did not think the site is suitable for a hotel, noting there are already lots of hotels in the area or the area is primarily residential. Another said they think there are too many apartment buildings in the area. Two (2) said the hotel will generate too much traffic and one of the two also thinks the apartment building will generate too much traffic too. Two (2)

noted they think a hotel will create too much noise, and another said the apartment building will generate more noise to an already noisy intersection. One (1) said they are concerned the hotel will attract a transient population and undesirable activities. And two (2) said they will lose their sun – and in one case view of trees too.

Two (2) of the six (6) respondents who voiced issues with the proposal do not want the site developed at all; they would prefer it be a park. The other four (4) who responded are against changing the agreement. Although one (1) said they would be okay with a four-storey apartment building if the hotel option was removed and another (1) said they would marginally prefer an apartment building over a hotel and like the idea of having some retail.