

Presentation to City of Hamilton, Planning Committee, Tuesday May 17th, 2016.

By Peter O'Hagan,
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Regarding _ West Harbour, Pier 7& 8 Redevelopment.

Good morning,

My name is Peter O'Hagan, a Hamilton resident from East Mountain and I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you regarding West Harbour , Pier 7 & 8 redevelopment.

I speak on my own behalf, as a regular resident / taxpayer who is interested in building a better city.

Some background- my training and experience is in innovative and disruptive industrial design for a career of more than 40 years. At present I am working one a patent pending renewable energy system that has the potential of creating many good jobs in our region, for export world wide.

My interest in the West Harbour goes back to 1979, when I was introduced, through the Conserver Society, to Gil Simmons, whose house had a view of the then toxic Lax properties, (slide 02) as well as an amazing view out across Cootes Paradise, and she was interested in cleaning up the Bay.

When I first suggested that the Lax property be turned into a city park, there were many comments, not all kind, but it was the start of a long term interest for me. My initial sketches were to install a separated lined swimming area with a pumped natural bio filter system.

I had also at that time suggested that the rail yards be covered over as per slide 03, perhaps some day we will get there. At that time the rail yards were considering reserving a line along the bay for dumping toxic chemicals if there was an emergency, so Gil was making people aware of the dangers and the general deplorable conditions of the bay water quality.

Since I was involved with upgrading several companies, as a result of Gil's awareness, I went on to eliminate many of the chemicals that were in regular use that at that time, that usually ended up as part of the industrial process being discharged in a diluted form into sewer system.

My interest in the bay was also a part of my committee work at Hamilton Chamber of Commerce for many years.

Slide 04 shows the lovely view that most hold in awe, one of the better secrets of Hamilton.

Slide 05 shows an overall satellite plan view of the West Harbour general area, with Pier 7&8 being a relatively small part of the whole, and the relationship to traffic arteries, GO station, etc.

Slide 06 shows a concept plan by the Hamilton Waterfront Trust for redevelopment of West Harbour. Much work has gone into this, but I have a concern that with the recent emphasis on Pier 's 7&8 redevelopment, this is not receiving the scrutiny that is required. Plans were made to suit the very little land available at the time, prior to Pier 7&8 coming into City control, so I believe that we should be relooking at what perhaps made sense then is still applicable, given the extra land now available at Pier 7&8, before spending another \$12 to \$15M.

For example, would the harbour police be better remaining where they are?, since this is where the majority of new residents will be?, Initial plans were never to evict anyone, does it still make sense to end the long held lease of MacDonald Marine?

Slide 07 shows the present area under consideration for Pier 7&8, and has been the main focus of many recent community meetings.

I fully appreciate all of the hard work done by staff on present proposals and the outreach to community through many information meetings, so if I offer a different viewpoint, it is not to be confrontational with staff or the work that has been done, simply would like to express what I see as an alternative for your consideration.

Looking at redevelopment site, one sees many great plusses, such as the view towards Cootes (slide 08), the boating dock area (slide 09), for anyone who has ever sailed like myself, the "capture the wind" statue (slide 10) says it all, and more boat slips (slide 11)

The major development area (slide12), and general large area (slide 13) gives a visual of the openness that one feels in this area. I believe it is important to note the existing high rise buildings when considering this site.

Slide 14 shows the other view from site (steel mills), so it is not all Cootes paradise type views. Since this development is in close proximity to industrial area, believe that this must be taken into account.

In staff presentations, much is made of the fact that harbour views are maintained with low rise (6 to 8 storey buildings) compact form.

Slide 15, shows that harbour view is blocked by even a single storey structure, or high grass banks (slide 16) or low rise building of about 2 story Discovery building, (slide 17) and again in close up of fence/building/harbour view (slide 18)

Slide 19 shows how we can enjoy the harbour view and naturalized surface.

Overall my view is that the present staff proposal eliminates too much of the wide open views of the harbour, which is the main attraction of the area.

What to do?:-

Slide 20 – shows birds eye view of development site.

Slide 21 shows step 1, which is simply to clear site, entire area could be underground parking, with a “green roof” type roof cover.

Slide 22 shows addition of Building #1

Slide 23 shows a detail of a building support that was made here in Hamilton

Slide 24 shows a typical building hand sketch of what could be built, which does not block harbour views (one of the main criterias for this site).

Slide 25 shows the addition of Building #2.

Slide 26 shows a hand sketch of what could be built, which builds on existing built form.

Slide 27 shows an example of this type of building.

Slide 28 shows land available at boat storage company

Slide 29 shows land available at marine supply company

Slide 30 shows adding Building 3

Slide 31 shows concept of Building 3, with boat storage and marine supply company remaining in location, with a commercial residential complex above. This could also be a transit hub

Slide 32 shows potential location of a multi storey parking garage, if DND would agree, which would shift traffic to Victoria/Wellington corridor for traffic coming down mountain, or from QEW.

Slide 33 shows potential construction schedule for his type of proposal, with much shorter completion than the 20 years or so in present staff proposal, and a much quicker return on investment for City, so there are benefits from alternate type proposals.

My ask of you today is not to consider choosing this proposal over staff proposal, but simply to be aware that other proposals may be put on the table by developers that have additional benefits for city.

I believe that we should keep options open when writing the Expressions of Interest that will go out to developers (the next part of the process), and this should be your directions to staff.

If we narrow the scope too much, then we may miss a golden opportunity to have a truly unique waterfront development that would be a leading edge design that would result in additional jobs for our community, as we become the "go to " place for Sustainable Development.

By specifying for example that each unit would have a home office, we set the bar higher as a place to live, work and really enjoy life, while increasing the local economy and providing global leadership in sustainability.

Why a home office? It is no longer necessary for everyone to travel daily to work, one can easily be connected on line and meet, say monthly, face to face to review.

Naturally every unit would be to 2050 energy standards, low water standards, be completely accessible, and offer a greenhouse for relaxing, growing tomatoes, etc.

We have the educational facilities to record and document improvements.

A development like this could easily support a higher density than presently considered, while maintaining a large wide open "commons" as a people place.

A percentage of units must be set aside as affordable

Separation of all vehicle traffic would result in a model for others to experience.

The biggest danger is that you will allow the "commons" to be built on.

I believe that if we only consider this redevelopment project as a housing project to raise city revenue, then we are, respectfully in my opinion, missing an opportunity to be better, to once again be "The Ambitious City"

My proposal is offered as a guide as an example which could be offered, I am certain that there are others who have other plans, if given a chance to do so.

Thank you for hearing my opinion, I know we are all interested in building a better City, hopefully we can respectfully differ on opinions.

Sincerely,

Peter O'Hagan