

2017-06-19

Item 6.4 -- Proposed Permanent Closure and Sale of a Public Unassumed Alley Between Sydenham Road, Cross Street, Alma Street and Victoria Street, Dundas (PW17048) (Ward 13)

To: The Members of the Public Works Committee

My name is Barbara Patterson and I live in Dundas.

The following are some concerns my husband Ken MacDonald and I have around the possible sale of this particular laneway and potentially others in Hamilton. The City's term "highway" has several definitions including, alley or street, road etc. In this case the highway is an alley or I may refer to it as a laneway.

1. The laneway is not at this time or has not been in the past owned by the residents of 63 Sydenham but they proceeded to claim it as theirs, paving with asphalt half its length and mounting a fence across it, preventing free movement for others backing or siding on the laneway and stopping the general public having through access.
2. For the City to consider awarding this land to the owners of 63 Sydenham after their deliberate violations of a public, unassumed alley, seems an odd consequence not befitting their conduct.
3. 87.5% of the neighbours who live in a radius of 400 feet of the alley do not want it sold. It seems obvious to us that this is not a done deal! There also is not 100% consensus of those who directly abut and use the laneway, to want half of it to be sold off to one resident. This we feel affects negatively on some very important considerations of others living on the alley, the community at large and the "Historic District" in which it is situated.
4. Such as : One of the dwellings at the ally is an apartment building facing Alma, with more than several apartments, a parking lot at the rear on the alley which can park about 8 vehicles and numerous more vehicles are parked on Alma in front. As most residents today have two vehicles in the drive, a possible minimum of 14 vehicles need access to the alley. It seems only practical and safe and in an emergency situation with this many vehicles needing access to the alley- which is their access to a highway, like backing your car out onto a street- that they have the option of two directions in and out to Alma or Victoria.
5. Laneways reveal a charm and an historic significance to this particular district and typical of many older Hamilton areas. The unique character of this historic area is specifically that it is a "Designated Heritage District" of Dundas, which has its own particular regulations revealed to the purchaser when a home purchase is considered in this area.
6. We believe it should not be closed off to all of those who directly need it for access to their driveways and garages and parking spaces, nor should it be denied to the public who enjoy the quaint and quiet choice of travel by foot. Hamilton needs to continue planning in a forward thinking manner and act thoughtfully about the public spaces it has left, preserving that which is and has been in our neighbourhoods for 160 years!
7. We also believe the paving should be undone at the owner's expense. This is not progressive thinking or ecologically beneficial to the old trees in the area or the new ones beginning, as water just flows out to the street and down the sewers. We need to preserve water for living things.
8. We have walked the neighbourhood for the 36 years we have lived here and the alley has been one of those routes we frequented. Thank you for this opportunity to express our concerns for our neighbourhood and the City of Hamilton. We object to the privatisation of this and other alley ways.

Barbara Patterson  
Kenneth MacDonald