

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Concerning the Approval of a Development Application for 468-476 James Street North

From: Rob Fiedler

Sent: June 11, 2019 1:51 PM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

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Mayor Eisenberger and members of City Council,

I'm writing to convey my concerns about Planning Committee's decision on June 4th to approve a development application for an 8-storey mixed use building at 467-478 James Street North. I think City Council should reconsider and not approve this application as it represents a significant departure from the area's approved and in-force secondary plan, Setting Sail. Approval in my view effectively represents an ad-hoc replanning of the James Street North corridor in the North End and does so without a single public meeting being conducted by City staff, other than the statutory public meeting convened at Planning Committee last week.

I have lived in the North End since 2011 and support intensification. I believe strategic and thoughtful mixed-use redevelopment/residential intensification along James Street North can make a positive contribution to the neighbourhood and can be done in a way that respects and enhances the existing character of neighbourhood. Unfortunately, I have to agree with the Design Review Panel's high-level assessment that the proposed development for 468-476 James Street North is "aggressive" for its context.

I worry that its approval will undermine Setting Sail and that without further steps to comprehensively consider the recommendations of the James North Mobility Hub Study and amend Setting Sail as part of a process to bring it into Hamilton's Urban Official Plan (UHOP) we will be subject to a series of site-specific official plan amendments without a firm basis or transparent planning framework to guide us.

I served as President of the North End Neighbours in 2015, which has since become the North End Neighbourhood Association, and have taken an active interest in planning and development in the North End since 2013, when I attended public meetings as part of the James North Mobility Hub Study and Metrolinx's planning for the West Harbour GO. I don't feel the development application being recommended for approval by the Planning Committee is in keeping with what was conveyed to the public then and it appears to exceed with regard to height and massing what is contemplated by the recommendations of the James North Mobility Hub Study approved by Council in September 2014.

As the Mobility Hub Study was conducted specifically in response to the province's decision to build a GO station on the southern edge of the North End neighbourhood, I find it disconcerting that the City seems willing in such a short time to disregard the recommendations of the study that pertain to the scale of development that should occur along James North from Strachan to Burlington Street and approve changes that further depart from the approved secondary plan for the area. This can only reduce public trust in the planning process.

Respectfully submitted,
Rob Fiedler