



December 2, 2019

Planning Committee
City of Hamilton
71 Main Street West
Hamilton ON L8P 4Y5

RE: UHOPA-17-033 & ZAC 17-073 (125-129 Robert St.)

To the Members of the Planning Committee:

We are writing you today in support of a proposed Official Plan Amendment and Zoning Bylaw Amendment (UHOPA-17-033 & ZAC 17-073) related to a “gentle intensification” or “missing-middle housing” proposal at 125-129 Robert St., in the Beasley Neighbourhood.

On February 14, 2018, Renee Sekula, the owner of 125-129 Robert St. attended a Beasley Neighbourhood Association meeting at the Beasley Community Centre to inform us of plans she had for the subject properties. Members were interested in hearing about the plans for a new, 3-storey, 7-unit building on the site. At the time, members appreciated the human scale of the proposal, that the development would add to the rental stock, and that the increase in dwelling units would address affordability and housing availability concerns in the neighbourhood. Members also highlighted a clear desire to save the existing, mature trees on the site. As presented, the project represented “gentle intensification” of Beasley, and the BNA’s executive committed to write a letter in support once details were confirmed.

On November 13, 2019, Ms. Sekula & her architect, Philip Toms, from Toms + McNally, attended the Association’s monthly meeting to provide an update on the proposal, and formally seek our written support. Questions were posed by some of the 30+ people in attendance, and members heard the revised plans for on-street parking to save the trees, and a reduction of 1 unit from 7 to 6 units.

As we have communicated in the past on other projects in Beasley, considering our neighbourhood’s high “walk score” (i.e. the proximity to amenities, and the enhanced ability to walk to access them) the Association sees the benefit of considering a reduced number of required on-site parking spots. A flexible approach to on-site parking has facilitated the prompt building of previous intensification projects in Beasley, and in the case of this development, will also maintain the environmental benefits provided by trees as the City addresses a climate emergency.

Some discussion took place regarding the City’s requirements for the number of spots and we understand the proposal maintains the same overall parking supply (technically 0 spaces in either scenario), but avoids new boulevard parking spaces and their associated parking

pads and curb cuts. This leaves intact the existing parking on-street in front of the properties, which is available to all residents, their visitors, and the community. Members have previously pointed out accessibility issues associated with sharply sloping curb-cuts (i.e. pedestrians and those with mobility devices sometimes face challenges maintaining balance on these slopes, especially in icy/snowy winter conditions), and that parking pads privatize previously “common” on-street parking spots. After deliberation and discussion with members and residents who live nearby, we believe the proponent’s solution to the parking/tree issue is a reasonable one, and no objections were expressed.

Members also expressed support for the fact that the proposed development includes units of various sizes and configurations, including one fully-accessible unit, and that the project is oriented to renters. Given the sharply rising rents and low rental vacancy rate in Hamilton, members were also supportive of these aspects of the project. Following the discussion, a vote was taken on a motion to write this letter of support, and it received unanimous consent.

Please let us know if you have any further questions, and we look forward to you helping us continue to make Beasley a greener and healthier place to live, work and play.

Sincerely,



Alexandra Murphy
Co-Chair



Karlie Rogerson
Co-Chair

Copy:

Renee Sekula

Philip Toms, Toms+McNally Design