

November 18, 2020

Planning Committee
City of Hamilton
71 Main Street West, 1st Floor
Hamilton, Ontario
L8P 4Y5

Re: File No. UHOPA-20-007

We are writing to voice our approval to the proposed plan to change the designation of the lands located at 19 Dawson Avenue in Stoney Creek from Institutional to medium density residential, and to permit the construction of five 2.5 story townhouse dwellings.

For several years as the membership of the Masonic Lodges operating out of that building were declining, it was evident that the building was no longer viable for our purposes. Having operated out of that building and in this community for decades, and having met several of the immediate neighbourhood residents, we are surprised that there are even a few households opposed to the development. Over the years there have been several complaints about our parking or lack thereof and many times there were remarks that residents could not wait until the property was converted back to residential.

In our earlier years and as recent as 3 years ago there were 3 Masonic Lodge's operating out of that building, with each Lodge having a minimum of 3 meetings per month. On special occasions for example, Christmas, Valentines day, Easter, and several Masonic Calendar occasions, there would be cause for extra social events with many more visitors than usual. Our meetings are a usually a minimum of 2 hours in length with at least another 2 hours in the banquet room. We also rented out the banquet room, often several times per month. Very often during these events the commercial kitchen would be in use, not to mention our 5 washrooms were always utilized. Never once was there a complaint about the water pressure during our events or those held by renters, where washrooms, sinks and other utilities were being used at capacity. We are adamant that there will be a reduction in use intensity by having 5 small family residences in place of 3 vibrant Lodges active in that building, and it is unfathomable that this proposal would be turned down after the huge development across the street was approved.

On the issue of parking and traffic, we sometimes required 70 or more parking spaces most of which were on the street. With the construction of the 5-story retirement residence right across the road, and the Stoney Creek Dairy Parking facilities no longer available, It meant everyone now had to park on the road. We find it quite interesting that there would be given any consideration to the idea that parking will now increase, compared to the amount of parking we required. We also entertained the idea of selling the building to other entities, for example religious groups or daycare providers and the like. Each of these potential options would have not required the zoning change, but would have increased parking, traffic, and utility use issues. There was much thought put in about what we wanted in the perspective buyers of this land in this community, and for anyone who is questioning 5 townhouses and opposing this small project we believe they should further research the other potential outcomes. We have, and we are certain that this is the absolute best option, not only for this community specifically, but for the City of Hamilton in general.

We would also like to say a few personal words about Mr. Centofanti as we have come to know him well over the years. When we approached Marco to consider the purchase of the building over 2 years ago, Marco would not consider this project. However, over the course of one year and after consultation with family, lawyers, industry professionals and city staff, it became clear to him that this was something that he could undertake. However irrelevant, we believe Marco is a modest man and has the best intentions of the city and neighborhood in mind.

In conclusion, it would be a disappointment to our Lodge and the Stoney Creek Community as a whole, should this project, which city staff is already recommending approval of, be prevented from moving forward. It could cost the city and taxpayers dearly instead of gaining tax revenue, and more importantly it would be a GROSS INJUSTICE if council, who approved a large development like Amica, the shareholders of which are likely multi millionaires, could then turn around and not approve this proposal, potentially causing financial hardship to a new family.

Les R. Vass
President
Stoney Creek Masonic Hall Association
