

Mark J.D. Broadbent CD

Hamilton, ON

24 February, 2021

Councillor Danko and City Council  
71 Main Street  
Hamilton, ON L8P 4Y5

## Re: Purchase and Sale of 60 Caledon Ave, Yeoville Neighbourhood

Dear Mr. Danko and Council,

I would first like to thank Mr. Danko for meeting with me on 8 February 2021.

I feel I must express my position on the process that has taken place concerning the above property.

### **The Neighbourhood**

Yeoville Neighbourhood is also known by our city as planning unit 7104. Yeoville is bound by four busy arterial roads; Upper James, The LINC, West 5th and Mohawk Road. It contains businesses along Upper James, approx 420 households, a school and three churches. As of 2017, approx 1100 people lived in the neighbourhood. Yeoville contains 60 Caledon Ave which started its life as Caledon Secondary School in 1969.

### **The Property**

60 Caledon Ave has 2 sections: The North section (approx 1.62ha-4acres) is a typical school property, flat with sport fields, parking, and a school. The South section (approx 1.25ha-3.1acres) is unique with rolling hills and drainage routes from the West to a central basin with a large culvert on the East edge. Aerial photos of the space from 1965 show that the South section is very similar to the original natural lay of the land. The South section of the property has acted as Yeoville's Green Space and Storm Water Management for over 50 years. Some would like to argue this is a typical school property but if you Google street view the property, you can see the two sections are uniquely different from one another.

### **The Process**

I question the process of the purchase and sale of the above property. I don't want anyone to believe that I or any of my fellow community members are 'Johnny come lately'. I lobbied my former Councillor concerning the property as far back as 2013 via letters, emails and at a meeting held at Westmount Recreation Center. I brought up the property during the last two elections to our former Councillor and our current one. My neighbour Mr. Karston made a presentation to council along with the Rolston NAP in 2016 to persuade our City to purchase the property to maintain Yeoville's Green Space.

So, what happened? My review has revealed a fair amount of information to date. I must remind you that many key Staff Reports relating to the property remain secret even though it is two months since the sale has been completed. This is what I know to date:

1. Since 1998 our city has purchased 24 properties from the HWDSB. 23 of these properties have been purchased for full or partial public use. Only 60 Caledon Ave was purchased and then sold outright with no holdback of any property or provisions in the sale for any public use.
2. It has been pointed out to me that this has been a public process. Let us look at that: I checked back 4 years of city news releases and all I could find is the misleading 18 Dec 2020 news release announcing the sale of the property. Truthfully, I can only speak for myself but based on the information in Item 3, I assumed the property had been secured so I was not checking our cities real estate listing.
3. The winning purchasers were planning a feasibility study in 2018 on the bases of our city purchasing the property and then selling it. The purchaser knew this about the property but the residents were advised of nothing, not even a poster. In fact, after the 2018 purchase as our city and purchaser made their plans, the neighbourhood saw things progressing in a different way. Public park signs were placed on both Tyrone Dr and Caledon Ave on the South Section. 10 trees (8 remain) were planted along the Tyrone Dr and Caledon Ave sidewalk of the South Section. The residents believed that we had secured our green space and evidently someone at our city believed the same.
4. Interesting piece of information: The property cost \$5.39M (\$748611.11 per acre) with \$3.13M coming from the City's \$50M Poverty Reduction Investment Fund and \$2.26M from development charges. The funding formula breakdown in percentages matches the size of each of the sections. \$3.13M for the approx 4acre North Section(58%) and \$2.26M for the approx 3acre South Section(42%). Again, it appears initially there were different plans for each section of the property.
5. An information report; PW17061 dated August 15, 2017, prepared by Meghan Stewart is one of the few available to the public. This report disturbs me. I believe this is the report that everyone uses as to the defence of the South Section of the property not being preserved for the neighbourhood. I have read this report over several times and have come to the same conclusion; it's flawed. The report recommends no neighbourhood park is warranted but this recommendation is in direct contravention of the Urban Hamilton Official Plan for parkland provisioning of .7ha per 1000 people. The report also acknowledges our city was not meeting the parkland requirements of the Official Plan at the time. It is my position that they should have recommended to purchase the property and once purchased, .8ha of the property should be set aside for the neighbourhood. If you include the development of the North Section, then approx 1ha should be set aside. This is interesting because that is approximately the size of the South Section. By my current calculation, the Yeoville Neighbourhood now has 0ha of public green space, certainly well below the Urban Hamilton Official Plan.

Yeoville is where I grew up and when I think back, I spent roughly 80% of my time in the neighbourhood. Each summer we had a Supie at the school property. We played baseball and football at the school and flew kites in the South Section. On 23 June 2019, my spouse and our Son flew kites for the whole afternoon in the South Section. There are no power lines. We walk our dog there regularly as do many of our neighbours. Many of the children from the existing Victoria Park Housing play in the South Section. Now, if you suggested to me that my 11 year old son could go to Captain Cornelius Park (Rolston Neighbourhood) to fly a kite or to walk our dog, or the kids from the Victoria Park Housing complex can go play there, I would say you're mad. We all know the traffic issues affecting our cities arterial roads and neighbourhood streets. We just have to look at the tragic death of Jude Strickland crossing Upper Gage as an example of the dangers our children face. The less major roads to cross to enjoy green grass and have a place to run, the better.

6. I reviewed 14 new and redevelopment sites on the Hamilton Mountain and visited several in the Ward 8 boundaries. All of these sites have Storm Water Management in place. The Fessedon Neighbourhood on the West Mountain had years of flooding. Our city had to purchase 4 acres of property from the HWDSB at Sir Allan Macnab Secondary School for Storm Water Management and spent millions of dollars in other work to solve these issues. Our city owned the Yeoville Storm Water Management System and sold it.

The Yeoville residents are organizing but unfortunately we were invited to play the game in the last period. We will be advocating for the children of the entire neighbourhood to have a safe place to enjoy life. We will seek to maintain our storm water protection. We will work to maintain the integrity of our little part of our city.

I believe the sale of the South Section of 60 Caledon Ave is a travesty and a horrible loss to the Yeoville Neighbourhood and our city. I believe mistakes have been made and do not have faith in the planning process to protect our interests. I would ask you all to consider the points I have made in this letter and hope we can work together and if possible reverse some of the damage that has and will occur. I have 2 further requests:

- a) release all secret documents related to the purchase and sale of 60 Caledon Ave and
- b) if our city has any financial interest in this property, I ask you to leverage that interest to prevent the South Section being built over.

Thanking you,



Mark Broadbent CD

