

From: Sandy McIntosh

Sent: April 1, 2021 11:29 AM

To: VanderBeek, Arlene <Arlene.VanderBeek@hamilton.ca>

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Subject: April 6, 2021 Planning Committee Item CI 20-E & CI 21-A and report PED 20093(a)

Dear Councillor Arlene,

My wife Heather and I are your constituents in Ward 13. I am writing to you today in advance of Planning Committee review of Item CI 20-E & CI 21-A and report PED 20093(a) to provide support and encouragement for some proposed positive change and updates in Hamilton to allow for innovative improvements for community building that opens some doors for much needed housing options to be more explored and readily viable for many people in our great City.

Having read through the recent report and draft bylaws concerning Secondary Dwelling Units yesterday and drawing from some discussions with other leaders in the SDU movement in other cities across Canada... The report overall and draft bylaw are GREAT. Along with this letter of support I hope it will be helpful to suggest a few potential small changes that could make the zoning bylaw revisions proposed even better. If these are not incorporated it will just require more minor variances...and delays in addressing affordable housing, smart growth opportunities, and providing responsive solutions to the climate change emergency. Overall, it is very encouraging to review a very positive report and bylaws being proposed.

A few noteworthy comments and thoughts:

- 1) Secondary suites are an affordable way to create more homes for people within our existing communities using gentle intensification. More people in our current neighbourhoods will help local businesses, schools, etc. to thrive and is an alternate response to sprawl.
- 2) The Province developed Bill 108 in 2019 and you support this move to allow homeowners to become developers as a way to help solve our affordable housing crisis. You also understand that many of these secondary suites will be used to allow family member to live closer together.
- 3) Developing secondary suites is a great way to reduce the carbon footprint of both these new homes, which will typically be more energy efficient due to their scale and location, and supports more walkable and less car-centric communities. You recognize that Hamilton has

declared a Climate Emergency and Urban Sprawl is a huge contributor to GHG emissions, this is an antidote to that.

4) Detached secondary suites are a great way for people to age in place in their communities, creating stronger and healthier communities. In order to support barrier free spaces and accessible design, you would support increasing the allowable gross floor area further than the draft bylaws, on lots where appropriate (see bullet point below).

5) City Staff have already included recommendations for a development charge (DC) waiver to go to the finance committee later this month, which is a great way to incentivize this type of infill. Similarly, a reduced parkland dedication fee and minor variance application fee are very supportable. You can express your support for these recommendations since Council will also need to vote on them. Incentives like these will significantly help allow these types of infill developments to happen across our city.

6) There is a new non-profit organization in the GTHA forming called In My Backyard which will be utilizing this new zoning in Hamilton and other communities to develop smaller SDUs for people in need of affordable housing in the back yards of willing homeowners. This is a great way for us to make a real impact in the lives of people struggling with the affordable housing crisis.

A few more technical points that will help make this new zoning even more effective:

- 1) The maximum areas listed in the bylaw for detached secondary suites is still more restrictive than necessary. You can request that the maximum Gross Floor Area (GFA) for these homes be increased and suggest a maximum GFA of 100m² AND a maximum lot coverage for the SDU of 25% - whichever is more restrictive as a reasonable maximum threshold. Further, the required setbacks from the rear and side lot lines and from the primary house will further limit smaller sites. However, allowing larger units on appropriate lots will reduce the number of unnecessary minor variances.
- 2) Note: While you understand that the goal is to create small-scale infill that is considerate of the context of the neighbourhood and surrounding houses, Toronto allows laneway houses up to 160m² in their bylaw, and Edmonton allows 130m². Vancouver allows up to 83.5m². The typical SDU size in Vancouver, which has had hundreds of applications, ranges from 70-100m² GFA.
- 3) The requirements for the 1.2m Rear Yard (4.33.1b2) with only sod could be finessed so that it works for sites accessed from a laneway through the rear yard. As it is written, the bylaw does not allow for other forms of visual barrier from the lane to the SDU which would improve privacy. We would suggest removing the requirement for only sod in the required rear yard and allowing for other permeable landscaping, fencing, or permeable surface treatment used to access the SDU.
- 4) The requirements related to the Ontario Building Code relating to the max 40m distance from the Front Lot Line to the entrance (4.33.1b2) of the Secondary Dwelling Unit will limit SDUs on larger lots. While it is understood that this requirement is related to the Ontario

Building Code, it can be dealt with at the permit review instead of being written into the bylaw. That way, if an SDU is further from the street line it can be dealt with as an Alternate Solution on a case by case basis instead of written into the zoning bylaw. For example, in Toronto there has been an allowance for sprinklers in the SDU if this 40m distance to an entry cannot be met.

Thank you again!

Sandy