

Legislation Details

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On agenda:	10/4/2021	Final action:		10/4/2021	
Title:	DEPUTATIONS REGARDING MOTION 21-P-023, PROPOSED CITY-WIDE AMENDMENT TO COMPREHENSIVE ZONING BY-LAW 2009-141 FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING BY THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS				

The following individuals provided Deputations concerning motion 21-P-023, Proposed City-Wide Amendment to Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2009-141 for Affordable Housing:

1. Michael Lato advised he was speaking in response to the proposed changes to Zoning By-law 2019-144 for detached accessory dwelling units, and specifically the reference to side and rear setbacks.

Mr. Lato requested that Council consider two changes to the amendment, the first to implement a six-month grace period for changes to the by-law to come into effect, to allow active development projects time to apply for zoning and permits under the current setbacks without causing undue additional expenses and hardship. He provided examples of other municipalities allowing a grace period for changes. Mr. Lato asked secondly, that Council consider reducing the rear year setback from 7 metres to 3 metres due to provisions limiting detached dwelling units to a ten percent lot coverage noting the impacts to the size of units that can be built. Mr. Lato expressed his concern with the 7 metres rear setback, as he felt it would automatically ban detached accessory dwellings from many lots and therefore defeating the purpose of the Zoning By-law Amendment to provide more affordable housing.

Mr. Lato requested that if failing to approve a 3 metres setback, Council consider more areas, as this would be more suitable to promote construction of new rental units.

2. Brady McDonald on behalf of BK Real Estate Investing advised of the number of detached accessory dwellings units, number of new rental units existing and under construction that his company is responsible for. He commented that the dwellings play a significant role in the community. Mr. McDonald acknowledged the current Zoning By-law requires additional restrictions but that he felt the proposed amendments are extreme and going against City staff, the professional planning experts' recommendations. He asked that Council go back to the City staff recommendations in order to satisfy the residents and give developers the ability to implement detached accessory dwelling.

Mr. McDonald discussed his concerns with the maps contained within City staff's memorandum illustrating lots eligible for detached accessory dwellings.

3. Colby Marshall discussed the memorandum and maps provided by City staff concerning the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment for affordable housing. He advised of his concerns associated with the mapping being misleading and unrealistic of eligible lots for accessory dwelling units given the proposed 7 metre rear yard setback, the allowable size for a detached accessory unit, the minimum square footage not allowing for a full kitchen, bathroom, living space and bedroom and the costs associated to building a detached unit would exceed the ability for affordable housing. Mr. Marshall discussed what the CMHC deems as affordable housing, an average family income, the current rental costs for second suites and garden suites and the lack of supply and demand in the City driving rental costs up. He commented that approving the 7 metre rear yard setback could hinder the creation of both detached suites and second suites, drive rent prices even higher and by adding extra steps in the process it would impact acquisitions for detached suites becoming more costly and timely.

Mr. Marshall requested that Council explore other criteria for different zones and possible relief based on the property it backs onto. He asked that Council remove the red tape and reduce the 7 metre yard setback to 3 metres.

4. Arlene McCann advised that she was speaking in support of the proposed Zoning By-law Amendments for Affordable Housing. She commented that in her opinion the City's best interest is to retain what farmland and green space that is left. Ms. McCann encouraged members of Council to read her letter submitted to the Legislative and Court Services Department for more detailed information.

Ms. McCann discussed her concerns with affordable housing, developers wanting to increase their profit margins rather than increasing affordable housing units, and the impacts that these developments have on the community and the environment. She noted that the proposed changes are a good start to learn from past errors and to implement stronger provisions through the Zoning By-law.

Ms. McCann advised that she felt that tree protection is gaining strength with mandating site plan reviews for detached accessory dwellings and City staff's investigation for an Individual Tree By-law. Ms. McCann expressed her concern with communication lapses, and the number of trees already lost. She asked members of Council to consider saving all preservable trees and reject the one-to-one replacement of a mature tree for a sapling.

In conclusion, Ms. McCann advised that she felt that the proposed amendments need to be approved in order to preserve existing communities, buildings, and trees and not to be faced with past mistakes of the 42 detached accessory dwellings permitted in 2020 and 2021 and only a small percentage meeting the definition of affordable housing.

5. Chris Franco advised that in his opinion, more regulations on affordable housing would negatively impact the housing supply in the City, would limit where the dwelling units could be located, and lead to identification of accessory dwelling units in certain neighborhoods. He noted that the dwelling units inject a new life into the existing neighborhoods and provide the ability to offer affordable housing options for people to have their own spaces to live.

Mr. Franco explained the rationale for Provincial Bill #108, More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019 giving homeowners the ability to have a second suite or additional residential suites ancillary on their property. He advised that he felt the City's proposed regulations would limit and disallow residents to put an additional suite on their property. Mr. Franco questioned whether the City obtained a legal opinion associated to the proposed amendments for affordable housing in order to be allowed due to the provincial legislation put in place is to increase supply of affordable housing and not diminish it.

Mr. Franco commented on his concern of Canadian borders opening, Georgian College will see an influx of students needing affordable housing, and that the proposed by-law regulations would restrict units being built and impact the City's housing supply and demand.

Mr. Franco discussed an email by the City's Chief Administrative Officer discussing affordable housing.

Councillor, R. Thomson asked a question of clarification to Mr. Franco.

6. Cathy Colebatch advised that she will be reading a deputation written by Su Murdoch. She read Ms. Murdoch's biography and academic credentials and co-author of book "Beautiful Barrie".

Ms. Colebatch read from Ms. Murdoch's deputation outlining the following:

- Council's commitment to address the affordable housing crisis;
- Built a second suite in 2016 on her designated heritage property with minimal impact to her

property or neighbourhood;

- Supports proposed Zoning By-law Amendments for affordable housing;
- Healthy trees are essential to battle against climate change;
- Heritage conservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings;
- Historic properties as perfect candidates for second suites and detached accessory dwelling units;
- Vulnerability of historic properties; and
- The character and long-term viability of the City's historic neighborhoods and properties at risk.

7. Arnie Ivsins acknowledged the passing of Alan McNair, a dedicated community member to the City of Barrie and environmentalist.

Mr. Ivsins discussed the City's 2012 Urban Design Guidelines, specifically that designs blends into the existing fabric of the neighbourhood. He advised that he felt some of the new homes being built do not blend into the existing neighbourhoods. Mr. Ivsins had photographs displayed illustrating the new buildings built into existing neighbourhoods. He provided his opinion on the Places to Grow Act as being mismanaged and misconstrued that every square inch of land can now be development. Mr. Ivsins commented that accessory buildings built behind homes in existing neighbourhoods are unsightly, unreasonable, out of character, and puts a strain on existing services by allowing small living spaces with insufficient parking and not affordable.

Mr. Ivsins discussed the current real estate market trends and impacts on families having to leave the City due Barrie being unaffordable place to live. He provided a suggestion for the former fire hall property on Innisfil Street to be an ideal location to build affordable housing.

In conclusion, Mr. Ivsins commented that the focus should be on sustainable, affordable housing and the community and not the needs of developers and investors.

5. Terry Forrester advised that he is in support of the proposed Zoning By-law amendments to create more affordable housing with less contentious issues and impacts on existing neighbourhoods. He commented on the amendments being a good start, however a minimum separation between locations or wards and the numbers of occupants should be implemented as per the Ontario Building Code. Mr. Forrester provided examples of detached accessory buildings, that were built in his opinion without consideration to the existing neighbourhood on Granville Street, William Street, Burton Avenue, Cumberland Street, Rosslyn Street, Peel Street, and Wellington Street.

Mr. Forrester discussed the demolition of existing homes to build new primary homes with detached accessory units. He commented that the demolition of these homes are impacting the City's landfill, tree canopy and displacing residents from homes that are not sustainable, environmentally, or affordable. Mr. Forrester provided his opinion that Barrie has an opportunity to implement strong building planning demolition guidelines, inspections, and oversee from start to finish.

Mr. Forrester addressed his concerns with safety related to an accessory dwelling unit being built in his neighbourhood. He suggested that to combat the affordable housing crisis, more buildings with rentals units should be built instead of disrupting current residential communities, and especially not in historic neighbourhoods.

Mr. Forrester provided comments on Council's Strategic Plan in relation to affordable housing. He encouraged the City to continue to support community partners such as Redwood Park, Habitat for Humanity and the County of Simcoe for public health and fostering safe, healthy communities and creating safer streets.

6. Mayor Lehman called upon Brenda and Christopher McCauley to provide deputation. The McCauley's were not present to provide the deputation.

7. Kam Holland (Naisbitt) advised that she is a resident of Barrie and community member of the Allandale neighbourhood. She discussed her support for the proposed Zoning By-law Amendments for affordable housing.

Ms. Holland noted that she felt that Council has a responsibility to residents to create, maintain and preserve existing neighbourhoods and communities. She advised that the Allandale neighbourhood consists of beautiful historic homes with property owners that take pride in maintaining and preserving their homes. Ms. Holland discussed her concerns with the buildings on William Street potentially changing the composition of the neighbourhood, the new second dwellings not fitting into the neighbourhood, concerns with absentee landlords, increases in rental pricing, parking issues and the loss of privacy for current homeowners.

Ms. Holland advised that she felt that the City was taken advantage of with the existing Zoning By-law by investors and developers purchasing the historic homes with large lots. She encouraged Council to consider the changes to by-law and the impacts to the historic neighbourhoods.

8. Barbara Mackie advised she is in support of the proposed amendments for affordable housing and that without the amendments, there will be greater impacts in the elimination of the tree canopy and green spaces in residential neighborhoods. She discussed her concerns related to environment impacts, privacy issues, and property damage as a result in the removal of 100-year-old trees. Ms. Mackie advised that she felt that if regulation by-laws for building accessory dwelling homes are not in place, there will be significant negative impacts on well-established neighbourhoods and effect the quality of life enjoyed by generations of families.

Ms. Mackie expressed her concerns with current real estate market trends, rental supply, rental pricing and illegal second dwellings in the City that could negatively impact affordable housing efforts.

In conclusion, Ms. Mackie advised that she has an affordable second suite within her property, and that building houses in backyards is not creating affordable housing and results negatively to the character of our neighborhoods, environment, and the quality of life.

9. Clint Taylor advised he was speaking on behalf of Ward 1 Residents Association to discuss their concerns with the increase in rental units in Ward 1 and the negative impacts to those neighbourhoods. He noted that most residents were not in favour of accessory dwelling in backyards.

Mr. Taylor noted the concerns from Ward 1 residents including an institution that recruits large numbers of international students to attend college in Barrie with inadequate housing available when they arrive. He advised that they support the institution's goal of providing job training for our community, but not for students without appropriate housing as it impacts the number of rental units available and increases rental prices.

Mr. Taylor discussed the impacts to Ward 1 due to boarding house and rental properties, the City not proactively enforcing by-laws, absentee landlords/investors that remain unaware of issues unless the neighbour complains when the situation becomes intolerable. He discussed the potential of a Residential Rental Licensing (Absentee Pilot) Project and that he felt that the pilot project would be beneficial.

Mr. Taylor advised of the Ward 1 Residence Association support with the amendments to the Zoning By-law associated to the proposed setbacks providing neighbours and tenants some living space, preventing basements in accessory dwelling assures that the environmental impact will be lessened in the neighbouring areas.

10. Jennifer van Gennip on behalf of SCATEH Barrie discussed the More Homes, More Choices Act that falls under provincial legislation and not the municipalities and was created to increase the supply of affordable housing to help every person in Ontario. She commented on the negative impacts experienced by residents from rentals properties and investors taking advantage of the new legislation to maximize profit that is outside the intention of the Act.

Ms. van Gennip asked Council to focus on how the proposed zoning by-law amendments will create affordable housing in the City. She discussed affordable housing options such as small footprint housing on existing lots, and established neighbourhoods adding backyard tiny homes and garden suites, converting basement and attics into apartments, limit accessory dwellings to one storey. Ms.

van Gennip suggested adjusting the minimum square footage to align with the Ontario Building Code to encourage smaller accessory dwellings and that property owners who wish to have a different size setback could apply for a variance in order for decisions to be made on an individual basis. She noted that if setbacks are too large it may limit the number of eligible properties for accessory dwellings.

Ms. van Gennip discussed one of the priorities of Alliance to End the Homelessness is to advocate for adequate rental options for low income households. She commented on the County of Simcoe's review of second suites that were not subsidized by grants and expected for 2021 noting that the review will indicate a decrease in the percentage of qualifying affordable units for the County.

In conclusion, Ms. Van Gennip asked the City to use all available tools to bring rental unit prices down as Barrie has one of the highest rental prices in Ontario. She noted that good City planning provides affordable housing options across the income spectrum for the people who live here.

11. Meaghan Kennedy and Denise Schulze advised they were speaking in support of the proposed Zoning By-law Amendments. They discussed the provincial initiatives for affordable housing and issues surrounding affordable housing.

Ms. Kennedy advised of a second suite built in her neighbourhood and shoehorned into the backyard, and very close to neighbouring properties. She expressed her concerns that although it fell within the parameters of the City's current by-laws, she felt that it should not be the vision for the City of Barrie and not for the community they purchased their home in.

Ms. Kennedy provided concerns with the impacts on property values, strain on infrastructure such as additional garbage, hydro, water, parking, vehicular and pedestrian traffic, lack of privacy and fire safety of neighbouring properties.

In conclusion, Ms. Kennedy commented that Canada has so much land and that residents should not have to live in a postage stamp area. She noted her support for proposed amendments to add limitations on second suites or accessory dwellings.

12. Rachel Holden on behalf of Uplift Ventures provided an overview of her professional background and her social impact mandate to provide a percentage of rent she receives to local community charities such as Redwood Communities.

Ms. Holden commented the projected growth for the City of Barrie by 2051 being 300,000 and questioned whether the projected growth will be reflected in the new Official Plan. She discussed urban intensification and urban sprawl and the impacts on housing when the population is expected to increase.

Ms. Holden provided her professional opinion on research she conducted on costs to construct housing versus costs to rent and concluded that the costs to build a 600 square foot unit be approximately \$250,000. She advised that by having a level ability of institutional land, there will be affordability for institutions to have access to more financial incentives and not have to create a business case for the community.

Ms. Holden discussed her concern with setbacks for privacy reasons between neighbours, sightlines into neighbourhoods, the size of rental units being unliveable and unrealistic with 180 square foot units, parking issues, and loss of tree canopy. She suggested that construction of garages and swimming pools have an equal number of environmental factors that can also destroy trees and should be taken into consideration during the site plan application process.

Members of Council asked a number of questions to Ms. Holden and received responses.

13. Taylor McAleer advised he is in support of the proposed changes regarding the detached accessory suites and that further restrictions could provide a reduction in the carbon footprint and the consumption of much needed green space in the City.

Mr. McAleer suggested that the focus should be on home ownership opportunities and not so much

on rental availability. He discussed his opinion on the current housing price crisis being fueled by developers purchasing properties within the means of first-time home buyers, decreasing the supply of lower priced homes, or purchasing modest homes sizeable backyards to develop detached suites. He expressed his concern for families looking for starter homes being deprived of affordable home ownership due to competition with investors looking to purchase and develop the lands for maximum profits. Mr. McAleer commented on the adjacent properties to these lands should a say in what is being built in the neighbourhoods they invested in.

Mr. McAleer advised that he would not have made a life investment in a heritage neighbourhood, set on preservation, if he had known that detached accessory suites would be allowed and be impacted with increasing property taxes and high market values.

In conclusion, Mr. McAleer commented that significant guidelines are needed to prevent neighbourhoods from being commercialized. He provided a recommendation to target affordability programs and focus on underdeveloped areas rather than battling for greater density in existing single-family areas. Mr. McAleer suggested that valid design considerations are needed, particularly in heritage areas, limiting the amount of detached accessory suites allowed per Ward and street, and rent control measures to ensure affordable housing.

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: 1. Deputation Requests 21-P-023 - Affordabile Housing, 2. Correspondence 21-P-023 Affordable Housing, 3. ADDITIONS - Deputation Requests - 21-P-023 Affordable Housing, 4. ADDITIONS - Correspondence 21-P-023 Affordable Housing

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
10/4/2021	2	City Council		