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STAFF REPORT:

Planning & Development Services – Planning Division



REPORT TO: Committee of the Whole
MEETING DATE: April 4, 2016
REPORT NO.: PDS.16.37
SUBJECT: Zoning By-law Amendment –
 Thornbury Commercial Resort
 Units
PREPARED BY: Michael Benner, MCIP RPP
 Director of Planning and
 Development Services

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report “PDS.16.37 Zoning By-law Amendment – Thornbury Commercial Resort Units;

AND THAT Council approve proceeding with the review of the proposed use of Commercial Resort Units in the Core Commercial C1 zone as a “housekeeping” amendment to the Thornbury Zoning Bylaw, 10-77 as amended, instead of a site specific use involving individual properties.

B. Background

On Tuesday, March 8, 2016 Randy Litchfield of The Corner Cafe & Grill and Casey Thomson of the Cheese Gallery met with the Director of Planning and Development Services to discuss Short Term Accommodation use within the commercial core of Thornbury.

Further to that discussion, Mr. Litchfield and Mrs. Thompson appeared as a delegation before the Committee of the Whole on Monday, March 14th to ask Council to consider a revision to the Town of Thornbury Bylaw, Commercial Core C1 Zone, to include short term accommodation as an accessory use.

Given the nature of the request, and its important impact on the commercial core of Thornbury, staff are recommending that the proposal be considered as a comprehensive review of the proposed use in the Core Commercial C1 zone instead of a site specific use involving one property.



The lands impacted by this amendment would be those lands located within the Commercial C1 Zone within the Town of Thornbury Zoning By-law 10-77, as amended, as highlighted in yellow on Figure 1, above.

C. Planning Analysis

Provincial Policy Statement (PPS 2014)

Planning decisions made by municipal councils must be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS). Within the PPS, the subject lands would be considered part of the Town's Settlement Area. The PPS notes that it is in the interest of all communities to use land and resources wisely, to promote efficient development patterns, protect resources, promote green spaces, ensure effective use of infrastructure and public service facilities and minimize unnecessary public expenditures. To this end, the PPS also notes that settlement areas, given the fact that they possess existing supporting infrastructure and economic drivers, shall be the focus of growth and development, and their vitality and regeneration shall be promoted. Additionally, the long-term economic prosperity of settlement areas should be supported by promoting opportunities for economic development and community investment-readiness, and maintaining and, where possible, enhancing the vitality and viability of downtowns and main streets.

The inclusion of commercial accommodation spaces within the downtown core of Thornbury provides additional opportunities for economic development and promotes tourism in an already established business area utilizing existing infrastructure and structures. Accordingly, staff are satisfied that the proposal is consistent with the PPS.

Official Plans

County of Grey Official Plan (CGOP)

The County of Grey Official Plan places the villages of Thornbury and Clarksburg within a Primary Settlement Area. The County Plan notes that land use policies and development standards in areas designated Primary Settlement Areas will be in accordance with local Official Plans and/or Secondary Plans. Additionally, the County Plan promotes the development of Primary Settlement Areas for a full range of residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, and institutional uses. They will also be the focus of a majority of the growth within the County.

Town of The Blue Mountains Official Plan

The 2007 Official Plan designates the subject lands as Commercial "Com" in the Thornbury Urban Area. The predominant use of land in the commercial designation shall be for all forms of retail and service commercial uses, business and professional offices, restaurants and places of entertainment, public administration buildings and other uses that would not interfere with the primary purpose of the area as a place of commerce.

The Town's Official Plan also recognizes that the Bruce Street area is the historical commercial core of the Town. The scale of the uses is limited by the size of the existing buildings and a general lack of parking in the area. It is the intent of the Town's Plan that this perceived core function be retained and that the functions of commercial, residential and other uses that exist be contained in a manner that will retain the small town feel and attractiveness.

After review of the relevant policies staff are satisfied that the proposal is consistent with the County and Town Official Plans provided that matters relating to scale and parking are addressed in the implementing zoning by-law.

Town of Thornbury Zoning By-law 10-77, as amended

The Town of Thornbury Zoning By-law 10-77 as amended, identifies the subject lands as Core Commercial C1. The C1 zone permits:

- a) Retail stores, business and professional offices, service commercial uses, restaurants, financial institutions, institutional uses, minor parks and open space areas.
- b) Residential uses ancillary to those uses permitted in Clause (a).
- c) Uses, buildings and structures accessory to those uses permitted in Clauses (a) and (b), but excluding open storage.

The C1 Zone also provides additional regulations for accessory residential uses recognized under subsection (b) above. Those regulations provide:

- 1) Location: in the second storey only
- 2) Maximum number of units: one of each 278 square metres of lot area to a maximum of three units for each commercial use.
- 3) Minimum Floor Area/Unit
 - (1) Bachelor: 40 square metres
 - (2) One Bedroom: 55 square metres
 - (3) Two Bedroom: 65 square metres

The minimum floor area shall be increased 10 square metres for each additional bedroom.

Although the C1 zone does allow for accessory residential uses on the second floors of existing commercial businesses, it would appear that these uses were intended to be used for long term residential accommodation; a typical apartment use.

Should commercial rentals also be permitted, subsection (b) and the above regulations will need to be amended to recognize the use and any additional regulations, such as scale and parking requirements.

Planning Analysis

The proposal, as presented by the Thornbury business owners, would be for shorter term accommodation geared more towards the travelling and touring public. This use is already recognized in the Thornbury Zoning By-law and the Township of Collingwood By-law as a “Commercial Resort Unit” (CRU). CRUs are common in the commercial zones of the Craigleith area of the Town and provide accommodation for the travelling and touring public visiting the area ski resorts and other amenities in that area of Town.

CRUs in the Craigleith and Camperdown areas are also associated with purpose built CRU complexes which have CRUs as the main use on the property and are part of a rental or lease management program. As the Thornbury CRUs would not form part of a complex, and would be considered to be more of an accessory use, their rental terms could be managed by the businesses that they are accessory to.

Although similar in nature, the CRU use should also not be confused with a “Short Term Accommodation (STA)” use as the STA program is intended to regulate the rental of dwellings for short term stays and goes beyond the matter of hotel/motel units and CRUs.

Under the Thornbury By-law CRUs are recognized as a use in the Recreational Commercial C4 zone around the harbour area, and hotels and motels are recognized as uses in the General Commercial C2 zone along Arthur Street. Although the use is recognized in these abutting zones there are only 3 businesses offering this form of accommodation. It would also appear that of the 23 businesses located within the C1 zone there may only be the potential for 14 rental units and some businesses do not have second floors and others are utilizing their second floors for business purposes.

In summary, it would appear that the notion of commercial rental units is supported in the PPS, the County Official Plan and the Town’s Official Plan in the Thornbury commercial core area. These uses are also recognized in the General Commercial and Recreational Commercial zones in the Thornbury Zoning By-law. The Core Commercial C1 zone does permit accessory residential uses and provides regulations for that use. Shortening the length of such rental to better accommodate the travelling public, and thus recognizing them as CRUs, would not appear to negatively impact the overall viability of the commercial core area from an economic development or land use planning perspective.

Next Steps

The next step in this process will be to hold a public meeting on the proposed amendment. Staff envision this meeting to be held in late April or early May. Following that meeting, staff will bring a second report, detailing the results of the public meeting, and a draft by-law to Council for their consideration.

D. The Blue Mountains' Strategic Plan

The recommendation in this staff report is consistent with the Strategic Plan and supports Goal of Creating Opportunities for Sustainability by Promoting a Diversified Economy.

E. Environmental Impacts

None.

F. Financial Impact

None.

G. In Consultation With

Bruce Street business owners

PDS staff

H. Attached

None

Respectfully submitted,

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