September 15, 2020

To: The Mayor and Members of Council  
   Town of the Blue Mountains

From: Blue Mountain Ratepayers Association

RE: Abbotts Subdivision

Please include the comments below as public input regarding the proposed Abbotts Subdivision (Public Meeting, September 16, 2020).

Our concern is related to storm water management in the western portion Thornbury, an area that includes the site of the proposed Abbotts Subdivision.

Inadequate storm water infrastructure in this area is a long-standing problem. Many residents have sump pumps running 24/7. Standing water is common after rainfalls. Outdated ditches and culverts do not meet the drainage requirements of existing neighbourhoods, let alone proposed new developments.

These issues were highlighted recently in a presentation by June Porter to the Committee of the Whole on June 16, 2020. The presentation also addressed the critically important need to answer key questions about the current status and future development of stormwater management infrastructure for the entire western section of Thornbury, and to ensure that all proposed developments, including the Abbotts Subdivision, are required to meet the most up-to-date engineering standards. Our current standards, from 2009, are in the process of being updated and it is important that the updated standards are applied in all cases. Committee members indicated that they are familiar with these concerns and passed a motion unanimously requesting a report from the Town’s Operations Department.

Given the long and well-known history of drainage problems in this area, new developments – including the Abbotts Subdivision – should proceed only in the context of fully transparent plans and concrete commitments that guarantee appropriate storm water management infrastructure will be in place. No development should be approved unless it meets the most advanced engineering standards, reflecting changing climate conditions and low-impact design to minimize runoff.

The basic principles underlying this approach should guide the pace of development throughout the Town of the Blue Mountains.
September 15, 2020

Ms. Corinna Giles,
Town Clerk,
Town of The Blue Mountains,
32 Mill Street, P.O. Box 310,
Thornbury, Ontario
N0H 2P0

Dear Ms. Giles.

Comments and Requests for Information
Town of Blue Mountains Zoning By-Law Amendment File # P2832
Grey County Plan of Subdivision File No. 42-T-2019-02

1. Municipal Act, 2001 Requirements – Sale and Disposition of Land

Subsection 270(1) of the Municipal Act, 2001 (Ontario) (the “Act”) requires that the Town of Blue Mountains (the “Town”) shall adopt and maintain a policy with respect to its sale and other disposition of land.

A critical aspect of the proposed development of the Abbotts Subdivision (the “Subdivision”) is that the Town is to effectively ‘contribute’ its land on which two road allowances are located for the Subdivision and, in effect, for the commercial benefit of the developer. By the proposal, the Town’s property will effectively subsidize the developer’s optimization of its land for its private development and sale purposes, and profit, by increasing the permitted residential density.

By the proposed arrangement, the Town is to ‘contribute’ the use of the road allowances for the proposed new road, sidewalk, service corridor and drainage and landscape buffers. This contribution of the Town’s property will benefit the developer as its own land will then not have to be used for
those purposes and can instead be developed and sold. To the extent that the Town contributes property, the potential density of the Subdivision is thereby maximized.

The Town is to effect this by granting an apparent perpetual right-of-way to the developer to use its road allowances for the benefit of its development. As such a right-of-way would be a disposition of Town property, the Municipal Act’s requirements apply. As such, the Act requires that the Town have (i) adopted a policy with respect to its sale and disposition of land, and (ii) complied with the requirements of that policy with respect to any grants of interest in the road allowances.

Please (i) provide a copy of, or link to, the Town’s official policy with respect to its sale and disposition of its property and (ii) advise of the steps it has taken to date to comply with that policy and will take going forward.

Please further advise if the Town has publicly tendered, or considered publicly tendering, for sale the property on which its subject road allowances are located.

2. Municipal Act, 2001 Requirements – Tree Canopy

The Town’s Official Plan mandates that it is a policy of the Town to implement measures to protect, enhance and expand the tree canopy in the Town.

Subsection 270(1) of the Act requires that the Town shall adopt a policy with respect to the manner in which it will protect and enhance the tree canopy and natural vegetation in the Town. Please provide a copy of, or link to, that policy.

The lands owned by the developer for the proposed Subdivision have already been substantially ‘clearcut’. However, this ‘clearcutting’ did not extend to the Town’s road allowances on which a substantial number of sizeable trees remain.

It is now contemplated that an additional 1.73 acres of old-growth trees be ‘clearcut’ from the Town’s property to facilitate the developer’s plans.

The proposed development contemplates further removal of trees after this roadway and sidewalk clearing. All trees located within the 2.5-metre landscape buffer on the Town’s roadway allowances
are to be evaluated for what are described as “site impacts”. The trees that are described as “hazard trees” are to be removed.

Kindly advise (i) how what is proposed is consistent with the Town’s policy to protect, enhance and expand the Town’s tree canopy and (ii) what steps, if any, have been taken to protect to Town’s tree canopy under its required policy.

3. Official Plan - Dedication of Land

The Town’s Official Plan requires that a developer dedicate land for park and other recreational purposes of an amount not exceeding 5% of the land being developed or cash in lieu thereof.

The proposed Subdivision appears to utilize all of the developer’s property for the proposed lots. It appears that no land is being deducted and, in fact, it is the Town that is ‘contributing’ use of its land for the benefit of the proposed Subdivision.

Please advise what arrangements have been made in this regard, the total amount of land to be dedicated or cash paid by the developer, and the terms.

4. Initial and Ongoing Costs to the County and Town

The documents submitted for review provide no financial disclosure. It appears that the Town is proposed to subsidize the Subdivision by (i) contributing its property to allow for increased density, essentially for the benefit of the developer, and then (ii) to maintain the Town’s property and works thereon in perpetuity, essentially for the private benefit of the residents of the Subdivision.

As each of the Town and the County of Grey (the “County”) have revenue and expense-sharing arrangements, the proposed Subdivision may result in net ongoing financial outlays by each of them.

The following requests for information are accordingly addressed to each of the County and Town with respect to the proposed Subdivision.

A. Please advise of the total cost each of the County and the Town are to incur to build the proposed road, sidewalks, curbs and gutters, watermains, sanitary sewers, subdrains, light standards, water reservoirs, hydro and transformers, service corridor, drainage buffer, landscape buffer, etc. (together the “Private Works”), including design, engineering, supervision and construction costs.
B. Please advise of the total amount the developer is, or will be, contractually bound to pay each of the County and Town for the costs in A. above and the terms of such payment(s).

C. Please advise of the estimated annual cost to each of the County and Town to service and maintain the Private Works and any rights-of-way.

D. Please advise of the total amount the developer is, or will be, contractually bound to pay to each of the County and Town towards ongoing maintenance of the costs in C. above and the terms of such payment(s).

E. Please provide a cost-benefit analysis comparing the capital costs to complete the Private Works with all development revenues received or to be received from the developer and advise whether the total amounts to be paid by the County and Town for the Private Works are to exceed their respective development revenues for the Subdivision net of planning supervision costs.

F. Please provide a cost-benefit analysis comparing the estimated annual cost to each of the County and Town to service and maintain the Private Works and rights-of-way with the tax revenue each is estimated to receive from the Subdivision’s proposed new units and advise whether the total amounts to be paid by the County and Town on an ongoing basis are to exceed related tax revenues from Subdivision residents.

G. Please advise if any amounts are to be paid to the Town for the intended ongoing use in perpetuity of the road allowances for the benefit of the Subdivision and the terms of any such payments.

Thank you for your assistance. I reserve the right to make any further enquiries.

Yours very truly,

Harry Burkman

C.C.’s by e-mail

Mr. Scott Taylor,
Grey County Planner,
County of Grey
595 95th Avenue East,
Owen Sound, Ontario
N4K 3E3
Ms. Denise Whaley,  
Town Planner,  
Town of the Blue Mountains,  
32 Mill Street, P.O. Box 310,  
Thornbury, Ontario  
N0H 2P0  
planning@thebluemountains.ca
CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

I live on [redacted], so the development has been planned for some years and rejected. It was a poor plan. One reason was an east/west road, that ran off the west road...but that was on a hill and drivers would be blind to the oncoming traffic. Now in a sense the whole plan is now turned around with the garages attached. An small access road is also planned which puts some space between the present properties and the planned one. The Huron properties were not complete when I moved here circa 1990. On the south side, about half the properties were not sold. One neighbor had an architect raise the house a few feet, because of ground water level. His basement windows are a few feet above ground. Mine was not...yet in May the soil, basement, was dry. I have also an emergency sump pump system, for obvious reasons. A neighbor to the north, had two. Apparently there was a watercourse to the lake somewhat originally. So basements in these houses may be problematic. The retaining wall, is a good idea. There is quite a drop from the originally railway path. I think it is a much better plan than the original. I might add the soil seems well for pine trees. A few were planted from a seedling, and are now so big, that one was cut down. One could have , and one person did, a forest in 20 years. Thanks. hope that helps.

Now if we could get better smoother roads. Very bad main street. The road in Dresden at that time behind the Iron Curtain, was much better. Realized (much later)it was the main Military road, from Russia to Germany. In '65 when I visited, everything in Dresden was dirty, decaying, and seemed like nothing had been done in 30 years. By the way there was no visible meat in the store fronts. The next year the whole system collapsed. Astonished everyone. By chance, I was back in another year. All the taxi's at the train station were Mercedes Benz. What astonishing changes. Freedom is taken for granted. Something I'll never forget. Have a good new year.

don and helga chapman.
Hello,

My name is Krista Currie and I am a full time resident of the Town of Blue Mountains, at [redacted] in Thornbury. My husband and I live in his family’s cottage right on the corner beside Bayside Villas. We are blessed to live right across from the beautiful Georgian Bay, and really love/appreciate all the mature cedar trees along the waterfront (Little River Park), and in our own backyard. Please note we are VERY concerned about the proposal that Abbott’s development wants to do with the old town road allowance. This would be devastating to not only our neighbours, but all the beautiful birds and animals that migrate and live in these trees. Please do NOT let them go through with this. This is a huge valuable part of Thornbury’s ecosystem. As well an immense amount of privacy could be lost for not only our family, and our neighbours on Lakeshore Drive, but also the residents of Bayside Villas.

We have seen so much growth and change in this town over the last 12 years. For the most part we are okay with it, and welcome the new families and businesses with open arms. Despite how overcrowded the beach area was this summer, it still made me happy to see people enjoying this beautiful place. We are all so lucky. However this new development does not sit well at all. Build the townhouses sure, but a new road seems to be stepping beyond what is necessary for this particular neighbourhood. We have roads that are already in place and effective, and another “paved paradise” would seem excessive in such a small neighbourhood. Why do they even need to do this?? Surely there is a way to build things ethically and environmentally friendly? The TBM needs to stop cutting down forests for development…it’s the trees and nature that make people want to here in the first place.

I am very concerned and would appreciate this being shared with the local Council.

Thank you.

Krista Currie

Sent from my iPhone
From: Tom Downer <tome.downer@outlook.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 15, 2020 12:11 PM
To: Town Clerk <townclerk@thebluemountains.ca>
Subject: Re: corrected draft

Sorry about this but I discovered a point that could be considered a factual error in my original submission please use this corrected version.

Thanks

Tom

On Sep 15, 2020, at 12:03 PM, Kim G <kim@kim.com> wrote:

From: Tom Downer <tome.downer@outlook.com>
Subject: Abbots Subdivision
Date: September 15, 2020 at 9:56:54 AM EDT
To: townclerk@thebluemountains.ca

September 15, 2020

To Whom It May Concern

Re: Abbots Subdivision

My name is Tom Downer, I have lived in a variety of communities in the local area including Meaford, Collingwood and Thornbury since 1980, when I moved here to teach History and Geography at Georgian Bay Secondary School. Like many, I have witnessed the changes to the local economy and subsequent growth and development issues faced by municipalities and their residents.

While not opposed to development of the vacant land, I am opposed to the construction of the proposed one-way road extending Bay Street West to Victoria Street and south to Huron Street West.

The construction of such a road will require the clear cutting of 1.73 acres of bush consisting largely of mature cedars. Apart from an undesirable change to the visual nature of the surrounding neighbourhood, this plan would put a road on the front and back of all the properties along the south side of Lakeshore Drive West resulting in a substantial reduction of privacy and a significant alteration to the character of the property of current ratepayers.

LOFT, the planners representing the owners of the property, acknowledged this undesirable outcome in their application to purchase these unopened road allowances in April 2016. This letter was resubmitted in 2017 and 2018 Staff Reports. It appears that the least desirable plan with the most impact on local residents has been submitted.

The removal of mature cedar trees from the proposed roadway may have unintended consequences on drainage impacting home owners on Lakeshore Drive West. Homes with basements in this area require sump pumps to keep basements dry as a result of natural high groundwater flows. There have been multiple water main breaks along Lakeshore Drive West and surrounding streets as a result of freeze/thaw stresses on aging infrastructure. When water mains break, sumps are overwhelmed and basements flood. Apart from the current ditch/culvert system along the unopened Bay Street West road and one additional culvert there are no drainage structures along Lakeshore Drive. While the plan proposes a new drainage ditch along Bay Street West, the development itself will increase surface runoff
and potentially negatively impact existing high groundwater flows. Removing cedar trees as a component of the natural drainage can only exacerbate an existing issue.

I would oppose any significant alterations to Lakeshore Drive West to alleviate drainage issues that may result from this development.

The Crozier Consulting Engineers assessment on the impact of traffic flows as a result of this development requires additional comment.

The 11 and 15 total two way trips generated by a formula, generalizes the specifics that apply to Thornbury where the population more than doubles every weekend. I think most can agree that increased vehicle traffic will be greater than suggested.

Sincerely

Tom Downer

Town of the Blue Mountains
Sept 14, 2020

Helmut Hock, Catherine Howell
80 Lakeshore Drive
 Thornbury, Ontario N0H 2P0

Town of The Blue Mountains
32 Mill Street,
P.O. Box 310 Thornbury, Ontario N0H 2P0

RE: Abbott's Subdivision (County File Number 42T-2019-02)

Dear Town Clerk,

We have lived in Thornbury for over 14 years, initially at 61 Lansdowne Drive and in 2013 we moved to 80 Lakeshore Drive. The old cottage feel of the tree-lined street with its full canopy is enjoyed by residents and non-residents alike. The Harbour West area is a uniquely attractive area in Thornbury that must be preserved.

As members of the Harbour West Concerned Residents, our primary interest is to ensure that any proposed development receives the necessary scrutiny to ensure that it is in keeping with the built form and character of the immediate surrounding properties. As ratepayers, our concerns are valid and should be respected when evaluating land development proposals put before Town Council. We fully understand and agree that the 1.7 acre site, known as the Abbotts Subdivision, needs to be developed. However, given its history, size and proximity to downtown Thornbury and the Harbour, careful consideration as to what is “appropriate” is of paramount importance.

There are several challenges with the site, namely:

- It was formerly a gravel pit,
- It was formerly a private dump,
- It was first clear-cut in 2015 and the again in 2017 without the need to obtain any permits,
- It is bordered by road allowances (Victoria and Bay Streets) which are heavily treed (native cedars) which combined with the existing ditches effectively manage storm water and drainage

The proposed development to create lots for 22 semi-detached residential dwellings including the elimination of the mature trees on Victoria Street and Bay Street West road allowances is outrageous. Furthermore, the current Residential One (R1-1) zoning is consistent with the existing built form and should be maintained to ensure the development is a “good fit” and maintains the “character” of this very desirable, prime real estate. The description of “Subdivision” is clearly more aligned with Suburban Cities than the Town of Thornbury!

On the Town of Blue Mountain’s website it states “Our Commitment to Engagement: Public engagement helps the Town do a better job to serve our residents and our community and is key to open and transparent government.” As a past President of two Ratepayer Associations in the GTA, my experience working with the Planning Department and Council has been much more open and collaborative than the Harbour West Concerned Residents’ have experienced so far. The simple fact that this proposal is the culmination of closed-door meetings between the Developer and the Planning Department, ignoring all input, concerns, and suggestions from the local residents, is truly appalling. When will the newly elected Council enact their commitment to its residents?
The Town’s vision as stated in its Official Plan is: “managing growth that will support and emphasize the Town’s unique character, diversity, civic identity, recreational and tourism resources, rural life style and heritage features and to do so in a way that has the greatest positive impact on the quality of life in the Blue Mountains”. We are aware that since 2016/2017, the Developer has been working with the Planning Department proposing a few different scenarios, none of which were ever presented to the public. Instead, as evidenced by the development proposal (the worst scenario) before us, the Planning Department unilaterally pushed its agenda to maximize intensification at all costs, ignoring all other aspects of the Official Plan and resident input. When will the newly elected Council implement their vision? Hopefully before Thornbury is ruined by reckless development projects.

We can’t understand why the Town of Blue Mountains believes that this application is even worthy of a Public Meeting. It smacks of a total disregard for the existing Harbour West community (ratepayers) who for the past several years have tried on many occasions to consult with the Town on what would be viewed as “appropriate development”.

We hereby request that the following be undertaken before any development proposal is considered:

1. Development of a Master Plan for the Harbour West area with specific focus on maintaining and enhancing the unique cottage and rural feel of the area.
2. As part of the above, in a fully open and transparent process, assess the suitability of this infill project for intensification by considering all criteria within the Official Plan.
3. Given the previous uses of the site, an environmental study/site assessment should be done.
4. A review of the site drainage with an emphasis on minimizing the damage to neighbouring properties and maximizing the retention of the established cedar forest (on the road allowances).
5. Conduct a detailed assessment of the risks and liabilities to the Town associated with stuffing two to three times the permitted density into an already ecologically compromised area.
6. Determine the true capital cost and operating expenses the Town will incur to build the necessary municipal infrastructure to essentially pave over what should remain a largely green space with the appropriate dwelling density.
7. Re-evaluate the current Planning directive that favours the Municipality to absorb the cost of construction and maintenance of the road allowance or sell to a developer versus other options such as selling some portion to the existing residents/homeowners who have oriented their living space under the assumption that road allowance (with its mature trees) will remain intact as it has for decades.
8. Establish by-laws that protect our tree canopy and prevent unfettered clear-cutting.

We are in favour of respectful development which is in keeping with the character and cottage feel of the area, and believe open public consultation will result in a win-win solution for everyone.

Regards

Helmut Hock, Catherine Howell
Members of the Harbour West Concerned Residents
Sept.14, 2020

To: The Town of the Blue Mountains and The County of Grey

Re: Abbotts Subdivision, County File #42T-2019-02, Town Of the Blue Mountains By-Law Amendment #P2832

From: Al & Keri Lockhart

Hello

We are property owners at ______ Town of the Blue Mountains. We built our house in 1995 and have seen many changes in town since. The proposed Abbotts Subdivision is of great concern to us, we are opposed to the prosed zoning by-law amendment and plan of subdivision.

The Plan of Subdivision is to create 22 lots on a small 1.73 acre parcel of land. This high density is not in keeping with the character of the neighbourhood. Refer to the draft plan map included in the application and you can see just how inappropriate this proposal is. Furthermore, if these 22 lots are created and developed, all existing trees/vegetation will be bulldozed, including on the road allowances. These trees define the uniqueness of the neighbourhood, it would be a crime to remove these old growth cedars.

The zoning by-law amendment is to rezone the lands from R1-1 to R2. We object to re-zoning the lands. The lands should remain as R1-1.

Further concern is of Bay Street West, the unopened road allowance which runs between the proposed subdivision property and the back lots of the Lakeshore Drive properties. It is on this road allowance that the majority of old growth cedars, and existing drainage path are located. This proposed development will wipe this out thereby ruining the character of the neighbourhood. If left as is, the road allowance would provide a good visual and audible barrier between any SUITABLE development on the subject lands and neighbouring Lakeshore residents. This road allowance also has a natural drainage course that provides suitable drainage, helping to protect Lakeshore property owners of water issues. The road allowance should not be a part of any proposed development and should remain as is.

We object to the proposed Plan of Subdivision and proposed Zoning By-law Amendment. Development must be suitable to the unique character of the neighbourhood without causing a negative impact to the neighbourhood.

Thankyou,

Al & Keri Lockhart
January 10, 2020

The Town of The Blue Mountains
Clerk, Corrina Giles
32 Mill Street
PO Box 310
Thornbury, ON
N0H 2P0

RE: Abbots - Proposed Draft Plan of Subdivision, ZBLA (22 residential units)
All of Lots 35, 36, 37, 38 and 39 Southwest side of Bay Street
Town of Thornbury

Corrina:

As you are aware, based on my previous letter dated June 24, 2019, I act on behalf of Grey Condominium Corporation #11 (GCC#11) Bayside Villas located at 63 Bay Street West in Thornbury.

I have reviewed the following items regarding the Proposed Draft Plan of Subdivision and ZBLA.

- Draft Plan of Subdivision – Van Harten Surveying Inc.
- Planning Report – Loft Planning Inc.
- D4 Study – Peto MacCallum Ltd.
- Archaeological Stage 1 and 2 – Amick Consulting
- Letter from Loft Planning Inc. dated October 16, 2017 (Withdrawal of Request)
- Letter from HG Graham dated July 31, 2018 (Request for Sale)
- PDS.18.104 dated September 10, 2018
- Presentation to Committee of the Whole June 10, 2019

The following is a list of questions regarding the proposed Draft Plan of Subdivision/ZBLA that GCC# 11 would appreciate additional clarification on.

1. Have the Planning Justification Report (PJR) and Traffic Opinion Letter considered the potential for 22 accessory apartments on the site (i.e. one accessory apartment in each semi-attached unit)?

2. Is there a conceptual site plan showing the functionality of the parking, building envelopes, etc. proposed on the 22 lot plan?

3. Further to question 2, if accessory apartments are being proposed on each of the 22 lots (as per question 1) is there appropriate parking available on the private properties off of the proposed one-way Right of Way? Alternatively, will on street parking be permitted?
4. Will the D4 Study be peer reviewed? The D4 study recommends that methane readings be taken in frozen conditions, will that be taking place?

5. Will Town engineering staff support a NEW one-way municipal street (ROW)? Does this scenario (i.e. a one-way street) conform to the Town’s engineering standards?

6. Further to question 5. Do the Town’s engineering standards require the proposed one-way street to connect through to Huron Street West or could the ROW just hammerhead?

7. Landscape Plan/Tree Preservation – Are any existing trees staying? Is there a proposed landscape plan yet showing proposed plantings in the landscaped buffer? If new trees are being planted, what kind, where and how large will they be? Can the landscaped buffer (2.5 m width in the proposed street cross section) be increased from 2.5 m to 5 m?

8. Would it be possible to close-in the proposed ditches and pipe the stormwater in order to permit a larger landscaped buffer?

9. The proposed street cross section shows lighting on the north and east sides of the proposed one-way street. Would it be possible to move the street lighting to the west and south side(s)? Is there a photometric plan available or will one be required prior to final approval?

My client reserves the right to object to the application(s) pending answers to the above questions.

I would also ask that my client (address below) and I be added to the circulation list on any further notices including any future public meetings related to the Abbotts development.

Grey Condominium Corporation #11  
Bayside Villas  
63 Bay Street West  
c/o Sheridan Management  
808065 Side Road 24, RR 2  
Clarksburg, ON  
N0H 1J0

Kind Regards

PASCUZZO PLANNING INC.

Andrew Pascuzzo, MCIP, RPP
June 24, 2019

The Town of The Blue Mountains
Clerk, Corrina Giles
32 Mill Street
PO Box 310
Thornbury, ON
N0H 2P0

RE: Request for Sale of Public Land
Victoria Street North, Bay Street West Unopened Road Allowances
Town of Thornbury

Dear Corrina:

I act on behalf of Grey Condominium Corporation #11 (Bayside Villas) located at 63 Bay Street West in Thornbury.

I have reviewed the following items regarding the Request for Sale of portions of the Victoria Street North and Bay Street West unopened road allowances.

- Letter from Loft Planning Inc. dated April 26, 2016 (Request for Sale)
- PDS.17.103 dated February 22, 2017
- Letter from Loft Planning Inc. dated October 16, 2017 (Withdrawal of Request)
- Letter from HG Graham dated July 31, 2018 (Request for Sale)
- PDS.18.104 dated September 10, 2018
- Presentation to Committee of the Whole June 10, 2019

I would also ask that my client (address below) and I be added to the circulation list on any further notices related to Road Closure proposal, including any future public meetings related to development on the adjacent lands (Abbotts).

Grey Condominium Corporation #11
Bayside Villas
63 Bay Street West
c/o Sheridan Management
808065 Side Road 24, RR 2
Clarksburg, ON
N0H 1J0

Kind Regards

PASCUZZO PLANNING INC.

Andrew Pascuzzo, MCIP, RPP

PASCUZZO PLANNING INC.

243 Hurontario Street
Collingwood, ON. L9Y 2M1
www.pascuzzoinc.ca
Re: Lots 35 to 39, Southwest Side of Bay Street, Town Plot of Thornbury

My wife and I moved into Thornbury about 15 years ago. We had already lived in the area but wanted to settle in the Town itself. We chose Thornbury because it had the charm of a small town. We believed that the Town would continue to develop in this manner and in most cases this has been the case but now development is changing the look of the Town and some of that development is eroding the charm. We are not against change but believe it should adhere to the Official Plan (see immediately below).

The Town has an Official Plan and therein is a section (A1.1) on page 15 entitled “Guiding Principles” which in point #5 speaks to the maintenance of the character of existing neighbourhoods “by ensuring that development and redevelopment is compatible, in terms of built form and street pattern, with the character of adjacent buildings and neighbourhoods and the scale and density of existing development”.

As residents who live beside the proposed development, we find the plan is not compatible with point #5 in terms of built form (semi-detached vs single family) which results in higher density than adjacent homes resulting in too many homes closer together plus the possibility of having coach houses over some or all of the garages (which are close to the backyard of existing homes and to our knowledge do not exist presently in the Town). The plan is compatible in street pattern but the proposed street is not standard Town width and therefore could be considered a condominium road whereby the maintenance presumably becomes the responsibility of the development.

It was also our understanding that the Town wanted/needed a Strategic Plan to set out development for the future. Given the present rate of development, this Plan is needed now. Would this proposed development conform with the Strategic Plan?

There is also the issue of increased traffic. The addition of 22 homes would definitely add to the traffic in the immediate area. There is a potential development on the north east corner of King and Lansdowne Streets which would add to the overall traffic in the area. The Town is also considering making Lakeshore Road a one way street running west from Elma to Lansdowne streets. This would add to the traffic on Lansdowne street, which already goes too fast in both directions. In effect, the impact of increased traffic cannot be examined just in terms of this proposed development.

We also cannot understand why there is only one proposed plan. A few years ago there was one option of a plan which had small homes on the development site and where the Town did not have to provide the unopened road allowance to the developer with the ensuing loss of the present green space. Why can there not be a better plan or plans which include a neutral planner working in conjunction with the Town planning department that would be more sensitive to the many concerns of local residents? The present plan was submitted to a small group of local residents more about 18 months ago in a meeting with a Town Planning employee and a planner for the developer. However, there were no options presented for discussion. Our group was very disappointed in this approach.

There are other concerns relating to the proposed development including the loss of trees and any habitat therein, drainage and the potential environmental impact of the former gravel pit. There is also the potential change in zoning from the current R1 to R2 with other concerns.

We trust that Council will be better informed after the meeting on September 16th.

Sue and Paul Roberts
From: Rob Robinson
Sent: Monday, September 14, 2020 10:29 PM
To: Town Clerk <townclerk@thebluemountains.ca>
Subject: Abbott’s Clearcut - Please say no.

Dear Town Clerk. Please say no to the removal of all the trees for this development. It will change the character of this area terribly. Thank you, Rob Robinson.

Resident, Thornbury.

Sent from my iPhone
September 14, 2020

Re: Town of Blue Mountains Zoning By-law Amendment File #P2832

County of Grey Plan of Subdivision File # 42T-2019-02

Town of Blue Mountains Council,

We are writing this note to lodge our opposition to the proposal to rezone the Abbott Subdivision from R1 to R2. We live on the property that is immediately northwest of the land in question. We are not against development, but, we do oppose both the type of development that is proposed for this site and the specifics of what is being proposed. We would like it to be developed appropriately respecting the unique character of the area.

Our general opposition to the site is based on 3 major issues

1. Water drainage – there are already significant water drainage issues between this site and the Bay every Spring and after any heavy rainfall. Eliminating the trees and paving over the land which currently absorbs some of the water will exacerbate the current issues tremendously.

2. Safety on Lansdowne Rd – Adding significant new traffic flow to Lansdowne will exacerbate an already dangerous situation. Anyone proceeding south on Lansdowne (either on foot or by car) currently hits a 50-foot total blind spot just before they crest the hill at King Street. This is dangerous for us every day. Adding more traffic to the area with the narrow road and steep pitch will greatly increase the likelihood that something tragic could occur.

3. Environmental impact – Judging by the numerous “mounds” on the site and the stories that I have heard from long-time residents, this area was an unofficial dump for years. No one knows what was dumped and buried there. Before any development is done on the site there should be an environmental impact analysis done to determine if development will release any toxins into the water table or environment.

Our opposition to the specific proposal for the Abbott property is based on the following issues:

• Density – After analyzing the other proposed development projects in Thornbury it appears that including potential coach house units, the proposed density per hectare in this development is ~50% higher than the average density of all the other projects in town. The density of this site is also more than double the immediately surrounding blocks of land. This high-density development is inconsistent with the unique character of the neighbourhood and will dramatically alter this charming pocket of Thornbury.

• Tree loss – Our understanding of the proposed layout for the property development is that all of the trees that surround the property will be destroyed. This will totally change the landscape of the entire neighbourhood and more importantly have a negative impact on water drainage and the environment.

• Coach Houses – we are very concerned that the Coach Houses will be added to the development and subsequently rented on a short-term (less than 2 month) basis. This will dramatically increase our issues with traffic safety, draw further on town services, not be in keeping with
anything else in the neighbourhood and not be helpful for the town’s long-term goal of providing affordable housing.

- Short-term rentals in general – regardless of whether there are Coach Houses attached to the units are not, the properties are all at risk of being used as short-term rental properties which will bring all of the problems outlined above.

- Road allowance – The current design for the development contemplates two one-way streets to enter and exit the property. This no doubt maximizes the number of units that can be built on the site. To create this, the Town would be ceding the road allowance to the developer so that they can maximize the use of their land without having to add their own cul de sac as virtually every other development in town has done. Having a wall of semis fronting onto the street will be counter to all other Thornbury developments and will not be conducive to creating a vibrant neighbourhood among the new residents of this development.

In light of our objections, our request of Council is the following:

i. The Developer pay for a Phase 1 Environmental analysis on the property and pay for any remediation steps that are recommended

ii. The Developer pay for a water drainage assessment on the property and pay for any remediation steps that are recommended

iii. The Developer pay for a sidewalk on both sides of Lansdowne from Bay Street to King Street or at least from Huron Street to King Street, to improve the safety of the street with the proposed traffic increase

iv. Council mandate that short-term rentals are prohibited on these lots

v. Coach Houses be specifically prohibited from the project
   a. If the Coach Houses must stay, that it is mandated that they be built without the capacity for a kitchen (plumbing for a second sink, electrical capacity for a fridge and stove)

vi. The Developer be forced to reduce the density of the proposed development

vii. The Developer redesign the development to include a cul de sac running from either Lansdowne or an extended Bay Street

viii. The Developer redesign the proposal to minimize the destruction of existing trees with a trunk diameter of greater than 1 meter

Thank you for your consideration.

Peter Samson and Cathy Williamson
From: Dave Shoots
Sent: Monday, September 14, 2020 8:44 PM
To: Town Clerk <townclerk@thebluemountains.ca>
Subject: Pre register Please read my response

My company is [Redacted]
I own [Redacted]
However i cant make it to the meeting

My feeling is as follows

I think they should be 1/2 as many homes And lots

Therefore Im opposed to passing this as it stands

I feel its crowding to many people into that small space when its all larger single family homes all around that area

If I wanted to put a semi detached home on my vacant lot #36 Huron st Im very confident that would not be appropriate or approved by council

Please if it has to be developed make it 50-60 ft lots with single family homes

You have bought the Old IGA for low income housing and we have lots of semi detached going in Napier st area. This should be kept single family homes in the Thornbury water front area

Thank you

Dave Shoots
We are writing in regards to the virtual public meeting being held September 16, 2020.

The planned proposal for this area is not in keeping with the unique landscape and community of the area. We are not against the development of this land but are against the plan as showing 22 lots being created. The lots are not consistent with the neighbourhood. One must also have a responsible development plan to protect green space along with all environmental situations on the property investigated and solutions to problems addressed prior to any development. Drainage has been identified and would be a serious issue in the area with this high density proposal.

We are definitely against the development as proposed and would like to have another option provided finding balance between all parties.

Thank you,

Isabel & William Thornhill
Submission to Public Meeting of September 16, 2020 regarding development application for

Lots 35 to 39 Southwest Side of Bay Street, Town of the Blue Mountains. (Abbots Subdivision)

My wife and I have owned our property on Lakeshore Drive since the 1990s rebuilding in 2004. The density of residences supported by the existing Residential One (R1-1) encouraged us and neighbours to invest in upgrading our properties, maintaining the unique nature of the area, appreciated by both residents and visitors to Thornbury as part of the Great Lakes Water Front Trail.

The development proposal before you seeks to substantially increase density by 22 semi-detached houses.

**Not disclosed in the notice for this meeting:** It is my understanding that the application, under R2 zoning, would permit the individual purchasers to have the option to construct a “Coach House”, which could be a “Rentable Dwelling”. This would effectively increase the number of “Dwelling Units” from 22 to 44, worst case if everyone wants a coach house. This is an unacceptable distortion of the planning process.

The proponent of this development was previously refused a lower density development plan and now has the audacity to propose a significantly greater density than that which was rejected.

One must ask the vital question: Why do zoning by-laws exist? Answer: To protect neighbourhoods from uncontrolled change without citizen input. If the council wishes to propose a new development plan for the whole area, which this is not, then a more detailed process of proposals and citizen input would be required.

In addition to the above it should be noted that no formal storm drainage plan has been developed. In light of the commercial development that has occurred to the south of Bay Street with paving at Foodland’s, LCBO and the Gas stations, much of the natural drainage has been eliminated. Additional commercial development can be anticipated on the vacant land adjacent to the gas station. Drainage back up caused our neighbours considerable damage resulting in successful financial claims against the Town of the Blue Mountains.

**We submit that the proposed amendment to the By-Law for this development should be rejected.**

A proposal that complies with the existing zoning, that maintains the nature of the area, would find support from us and, we believe, from the adjacent property owners. Still a viable business solution.

**Under no circumstances should Coach Houses be permitted.**

Cecile and David Turnbull