

Councillors,

I am writing on behalf of an ownership group who have been full-time residents of the Town of Blue Mountains for the past 5 years. While we have enjoyed seeing the growth of our community to welcome more full-time residents and tourists, we keep hearing from business owners that there are significant challenges to hiring staff to support these new retailers, restaurants, and cafes. We have found that even established operations such as Blue Mountain Village and seniors' long-term care centres have had difficulty recruiting the necessary service workers and care providers due to a shortage of housing. We experienced this first hand when two of our members who started a local business, had difficulty finding enough labourers to support demand.

Our team recently found a unique opportunity to convert what was formerly the Ferguson Funeral Home into an 11-unit rental apartment building. We have submitted our application to rezone the property, but are finding the DCs and other related charges to be prohibitive to our goals. While we recognize that the Town relies on tax dollars and fees from development charges to support the infrastructure required for growth, we are hoping that the Councillors can appreciate the following attributes of our project and consider waiving these charges:

1. We are limiting our conversion to the building footprint of the existing structure. Unlike greenfield developments, our project is not intended to put additional strain on the Town to build new hard services such as roads and sewers.
2. Our goal is to create a product that, based on our research, does not currently exist in Thornbury – 11 long-term rental apartment units (bachelors and 1 bedrooms) – which from our understanding, is a priority for the Councillors/Town.
3. We have spoken to businesses and members of the community about our plans and have received positive responses to bringing rental opportunities to the market.

We hope that the Councillors can appreciate the challenges of providing this type of product when the Town's current development charge is approximately \$32,000/unit. This does not factor in the Town's park allocation, planning, engineering, and building permitting fees, or the County's separate development charges. We have received notice that under consideration at the County, is the elimination of DCs for rental product in an effort to encourage this type of development. We are hoping that the Town will do the same. We are hoping that the value of the fees we will be paying the Town to complete our project (outside of DCs), will be deemed sufficient enough to waive the development charges altogether.

We are not "big developers" with deep resources. Our team is a group of young families who moved to the community because we appreciate the balance of nature, recreation, and the opportunity to support and create business opportunities. Our hope is that the Councillors can understand how the current fees will create financial strain on our project, and that the Councillors can appreciate that we are trying to provide a product to quickly meet the Town's housing challenges.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Susan Min