

Walter, Penny

From: City Council
Subject: FW: Email - Communication - James Gawluk - Opposition to Willows Admendment - CK 4131-24

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@saskatoon.ca>
Sent: Monday, November 22, 2021 8:20 AM
To: City Council <City.Council@saskatoon.ca>
Subject: Email - Communication - James Gawluk - Opposition to Willows Admendment - CK 4131-24

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Monday, November 22, 2021 - 08:20

Submitted by user: [REDACTED]s

Submitted values are:

Date Monday, November 22, 2021
To His Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council
First Name James
Last Name Gawluk
Phone Number
Email [REDACTED]
Address [REDACTED]-301 Cartwright Terrace
City Saskatoon
Province Saskatchewan
Postal Code [REDACTED]
Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable)
Subject Willows rezoning application
Meeting (if known) Willows rezoning
Comments
Hello city councillors.

Re willows rezoning application before you Nov 22, 2021
This is NOT a request to speak

My name is Jim Gawluk from 301 Cartwright Terrace, Windermere Villas, Willows Saskatoon. Thank you for reviewing my letter of concern and questions. There have been many developments over the past 8-10 months that need to be brought to your attention as you deliberate this question on our behalf. Please be patient with me on this.

OVERVIEW

During your scheduled November 22 2021 council meeting, you will be asked by the city planning department through the Municipal planning commission to approve a bylaw change application by DREAM developments to support a significant change to an earlier promised residential development plan in Willows Saskatoon.

As a resident and on a board of one association of Willows, I have been closely involved in this bylaw change application

process that DREAM has applied for, re further development at Willows. DREAM has changed their mind from the 2003 promises to suit their own needs. I say "their own needs" because there were assurances given by both the developer and the city of Saskatoon of a 2003 plan.

These assurances were stated in writing by the developer and the City OCP and DCD4. These assurances came in several forms. The developer promised through marketing and promotion sales presentations and supporting materials that the future development would consist of the existing 2003 plan..

While it seems to be a "buyer beware" environment, shoppers of dwellings have one more secure criteria to rely on. The City of Saskatoon's visionary guidelines of DCD4 and OCP that assure home buyers that they will get what they are promised, current and future, where these sorts of neighborhood restrictions are concerned from private companies like this developer. Keeps all on the fair playing field. These are the very guidelines that our family and many other families based much of our home buying decisions on and are asking the city council to stand by the existing OCP and DCD4 and deny any non related commercial development. We ask simply that you continue to stand by these guidelines as re-affirmed by council in August 2020, by denying DREAM's application to change the OCP and DCD4 to suit their needs and "NOT the needs of the residents".

I say "Not the needs of the residents" because over the past 8-10 months, we have secured over 80% of Willows residents opposing this Developers application. Some of the non opposing residents have been clear with us that they can't afford to be involved for various reasons but still do oppose. When our committees met with each household, we encountered only a very few residents that were actually in favour of the commercial additions. We have submitted countless numbers of opposing letters, emails, conversations, presentations etc proving that the residents of the Willows are still relying on councils previous 2020 decision to hold this developer accountable for those promises. It would be reasonable to estimate well over 95% of all willows residents are in opposition, however, we have provided supporting evidence of over 80% signed letters in opposition. You can see those letters at the clerk's office or in the October 26th MPC meeting agenda

MPC MEETING

I feel it is important to note that during the MPC Meeting, many of the oral presenters were asked "What they were willing to accept from the plan" This posed a couple concerns of which we were not afforded time to explain. First of all, the original plan of 2003 was CLEARLY what we were willing to accept as we invested in that plan. Second, the associations were advised on a number of occasions by city administration prior to the MPC meeting that MPC would decide on an "All or nothing" basis and not split out some parts from others, such as "What were were willing to accept", so asking what we were willing to accept was a somewhat unfair question to pose during that process. The other concerning issue was that there was zero open deliberation between members during this meeting prior to the question. In fact there were no questions as to who was "For" only questions as to who "opposed". During DREAMs presentation for much more than the allowed 5 minutes, there was this statement by a DREAM representative suggesting the golf course was financially stressed and this development would be the saving plan. So, of course that triggered questions from the MPC chair and Counselor as to how we would feel about the golf course failing. More on that later.

THE NEW PLAN VS 2003 PLAN

While this new plan represents a major change in the earlier promises, parts of the new plan from the developer rests within the already approved 2003 plan in some form currently. Aside from a few other minor changes, this developer is clearly trying to change council's vision of this neighbourhood with Commercial based additions that require change of law within DCD4 and OCP and benefit financially on the backs of the residents and the city. It is important to note that, contrary to what this developer would have you think, never has this developer actually taken the time to meet with the neighbourhood associations and ask that same question. This lack of interest in residents' thoughts is certainly indicating of this developer's concern only for their outcomes and not residents or the city's. As you review this file in its entirety, you will notice many other indicators that the developer doesn't concern itself with the residents.

CHOICES

When we decided to invest in the Willows, we had choices to make. Do we want a quiet neighbourhood, with residential only theme, staying away from the hustle and bustle of a more commercially orientated theme. Do we want a busy neighbourhood with commercial developments etc., or do we want something in between. In the city of Saskatoon's wisdom, they have designed many neighbourhoods with all these choice criteria in them by way of varying the controlling guidelines I speak of. Criteria like:

Commercial developments,
Major parks and green spaces
Schools
Places of worship
Sports & Entertainment venues
The list goes on.

All these neighbourhood features are what we use as criteria for the choices for the community we ultimately want to invest and live in. Please consider what you might think about when choosing a neighborhood for your family. You will likely look for a neighborhood that has those requirements and not ask the city council to change other neighborhoods to meet your decision choices. You might not want a hotel 60 meters from your back deck!! Council will not be helping the city by changing these guidelines for Willows. These guidelines were put in place to keep that city wide balance of choices. Council will only be helping DREAM. Council will be contradicting their own visionary model of varying the types of communities available for residents to live in.

GOLF COURSE FINANCIALLY STRESSED

The other concerning issue that DREAM seemed to suggest, or at least have us all worry about, at the MPC meeting was the fact that the Willows golf course is struggling financially and without this revised plan, it could go under. Seems like some sort of scare tactic trying to make city officials think the city will somehow be responsible for the potential "clean up". Let's not forget for a moment that over the past couple years, golf courses have enjoyed record patron traffic and customer support. Simply check the city courses data. The developer seems to suggest that by granting this application, there will be some miraculous increase in patrons for the golf course. We have information suggesting it has been sold out or close to, for the past 2 years. We have spoken to many full play members that can't get tee times because it is so busy. Staff members have told us that the tee sheets are completely full, the majority of the time. Patrons don't seem to be this developer's problem...The reason this course is allegedly suffering financially as DREAM would have you believe is not because they can't get patrons!!

It seemed to many of us that the developer was actually suggesting to hold the city officials of Saskatoon and its citizens responsible for any reasons this private business might be failing and that the City council should somehow take responsibility for their alleged shortcomings by supporting this rezoning change..This is simply nonsense. The City should no more accept responsibility for these "DREAM admitted" shortcomings than should the residents of the Willows and in fact all citizens of Saskatoon. It comforts me in knowing that our city councillors will not be so easily fooled by this tactic and will be approaching this with much caution as this seems to be DREAMs latest iteration on why they should get their way on this file. I respectfully ask the council to consider these points..

If you change the guidelines to suit this developers plan, based on what DREAM has said in their pitch to MPC, it will seem that you have decided to support this self-admitted failing business, preferentially. How will you then respond when other allegedly failing private businesses realize this and apply similarly for guideline changes to suit their business needs? Would you then expose council to explaining how this would not be viewed as "Preferential treatment" to this one business? I doubt that is what the taxpayers of the city that you oversee, would want, regardless of what neighbourhood they live in. I doubt that this potential "preferential" positioning that DREAM is asking of you is what you as counsellors want for your residents and business communities.

We all understand the importance of strategic, planned development and occasional need to adjust those visions, however, city administration and council has followed a vision to balance the community themes around the city. This change of theme, DREAM wants, in Willows is certainly nothing close to the vision the city had (and in-fact this very developer) in the beginning based on the original promises. DREAM is suggesting these commercial additions are needed in Willows. They simply are not needed in Willows and are currently available in other close neighbourhoods.

HOTEL SPA or the LIKE

Let's consider the proposed hotel as an example. I ask the council to identify another residential neighbourhood where they have allowed a 120+ room hotel dropped right in the middle of it.

Montgomery,
Riversdale,
lakeridge
Lakeview
Silver Springs,
Arbour Creek,
Rosewood
Evergreen
Brighton
Etc

Aside from hotel facilities on major arteries, we are hard pressed to find such a "residential neighbourhood" eye-sore or ear-sore in residential themes city wide. By DREAMs own market study, this hotel will be approx 52% occupied by 2028. This is a failure waiting to happen by DREAMs own admission and they are asking our city councillors to support this?? Then what happens? What's the city's clean up strategy after allowing this in the first place? This after DREAM states that this plan is for the wellbeing of the community. 52% occupancy after 6-7 years is not setting up for wellbeing. It is setting up for failure of which they will have no exposure to. Just another clear example of selling the land and not caring about the success afterwards and leaving the potential mess with someone else. We have 5 major hotels within a couple KM of their proposed location and every one of them are having difficulty getting appropriate amounts of patrons. You just need to ask these hotels. We did. Why would the city allow one more to dilute the already low patron count?

OUR REQUEST OF COUNCIL

All our family is asking you, a respected member of city council to support 2003 and recent 2020 decisions that you overwhelmingly supported re OCP and DCD4 and deny this application to change the commercial guidelines. We are not asking the council to prevent this developer from developing. Of course we want to see this developer successful as it helps our community and the city overall. The 2003 plan supports that success. The Willows residents obviously support the 2003 plan. Otherwise we wouldn't have invested in it and they wouldn't have promised it in the first place and the city admin wouldn't have supported it.

Yes, markets do change but holding the residents and the city accountable and responsible for a developer's short sightedness to those changes should not be at the detriment of those residents or the city. Nor do we want to see that developers' success be at the cost of earlier promises and recently supported bylaws. We don't want to see this developer push around our residents or city council with threats of financial failures etc. and trick them into changing their vision for the Willows community only to be sorry for those decisions later. Remember your vision for Saskatoon neighborhoods. Remember the balance that vision creates.

We are asking council members to carefully consider what this could mean to a unique neighbourhood like the Willows

and deny this specific request. Should this developer wish to actually engage with the residents of the Willows to come up with a win win, I suspect the community arms would open wide.

Kind regards

Attachments

Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting? No