

Walter, Penny

From: City Council
Subject: FW: Email - Communication - Alexandra Jewell - Call to reject proposed changes to Willow Neighborhood Concept Plan - CK 4131-24

From: Alex Jewell [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, November 21, 2021 10:44 PM
To: Walter, Penny <[REDACTED]>

[REDACTED] Neighborhood Concept Plan

His lordship Mayor Clark & Councillors:

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen,

I write to you this evening to ask that city council not approve the Amendment to the Willows Neighborhood Concept Plan as proposed by Dream Developments and reject any changes to the DCD4 of the city's zoning bylaw, and Saskatoons Official Community Plan. As I am sure you are aware of by now myself and at least 80% of Willows residents share this view. These are numbers that cannot be ignored by the council.

When purchasing in the Willows, myself and my neighbors were aware of the 2003 concept plan and we continue to support and expect the development included in that plan. Those of us who purchased houses here did so informed by Dream that the Neighbourhood Concept Plan included: a quiet residential area, a 27-hole golf course, no further commercial development except for that for the golf course, and Phase 2 housing limited to the area west of the Clubhouse with similar lot sizes and architectural controls as Phase 1 housing. Dream's amended plan removes all these promised features and in fairness it should not be called an amendment. An amendment by definition is "a minor change or addition to improve a text, piece of legislation, etc." This new plan bears no resemblance to the original that was marketed to us as a selling feature. To this date, Dream has not provided any rationale for why it wants to massively expand housing and commercial development in Willows beyond what it planned in 2003. In its support for Dream's plan, City Planning also did not provide any rationale for why they were supporting it.

Since Dreams' proposal first surfaced I have been part of a committee to spread information to residents of the Willows regarding this amendment. That effort has collected and submitted signed letters of opposition from at least 80% of the residents of the Willows. Does the City Council regularly approve community plans when the community opposition is this strong? I understand that times and plans change, and I am open to reasonable changes to the 2003 Community Plan. But those changes should be real amendments, not a completely new plan that does not look at all like the original, and Dream needs to be willing to consult and make changes. They made limited changes to the first draft of their amended plan, but these have all been minor and cosmetic.

The City's Official Community Plan (OCP, page 76) states that golf course communities should have larger lot sizes and limited commercial development appropriate to a golf course. If Dream's amended Plan were approved, it would change the nature of our golf course community and violate the sensible requirements of the OCP that MPC wisely recommended just one year ago after broad community consultation. Dream's proposal is not a simple amendment; it is a radically different plan. It includes massive expansion of housing and population in Phase 2 from an original 2003 projection of 722 to 1697, which will increase the current population of the Willows by about 335%, i.e., to 2418. Housing development (not included in the 2003 plan) to the south and east of the Willows clubhouse directly affecting views of some residents who paid premiums of up to \$200,000 for unrestricted golf course views. Minimum lot sizes of 50', considerably smaller than lot sizes in the rest of Willows. Introduction of non-golf commercial activities in the neighbourhood, most notably a 120-room hotel. These are dramatic changes from what Dream promised all of us. Dream's amended plan proposal should be rejected due to these changes, but there are still other concerns.

Traffic: I believe that more than tripling the population of Willows and adding commercial development such as a 120-room hotel could easily triple the traffic going through the area, if not worse. Although the right of way of Cartwright Street is 20 meters and it is classified as a 'collector' street, collector streets normally have a right of way 21-41 meters, sidewalks on both sides, and parking on both sides. At the MPC meeting traffic was brought up and it was suggested that Cartwright "could" handle the additional traffic. Just because it can does not mean it should. Cartwright has none of the features of a collector street because it is too narrow. Collector streets are supposed to be able to handle 5000 vehicles per day. I drive on Cartwright everyday, and I am convinced that the traffic volume will be higher than 5000 and too high for these streets. The City's own measurements (2016 and 2020) in Willows state that we currently have 2900-3600 cars per day, and these measurements were taken when the golf course would not have been very active (late fall). Dream's Traffic Impact Assessment (done in Oct. 2017 when the golf course would be closed) states that Willows has about 3000 cars per day. Is it really possible that tripling the population and adding a 120-room hotel right on Cartwright Street will keep us below 5000 vehicles per day when we are already somewhere between 2900 and 3600 with the golf course relatively inactive? Dream assumed that most new traffic would go out via Lorne instead of Clarence. However, anyone living here knows to avoid exiting Willows via Lorne in order to avoid the train crossing. Our own best guess is that traffic volumes on Cartwright Street could reach at least 10,000 vehicles per day, on a collector street that can only handle 5000. This clearly makes no sense. Can City Planning explain how they could recommend this?

Commercial and Mixed-Use Zoning: I do not believe there is any need for rezoning to allow different commercial development in Willows. Residents can easily access amenities in Stonebridge. While a spa hotel might be a good idea for Saskatoon, the City does not allow hotels and motels right in the middle of residential housing and The Willows should not be any different.

Fee-Simple: Dream's proposal is to develop the new housing in Phase 2 as "fee-simple", not bare land condominiums. The existing houses in Willows belong to bare land condominiums. Those living in bare land condos currently pay full municipal property taxes, but do not receive full City services. Consequently, they must also pay monthly condominium fees to cover expenses (paving, lighting, street cleaning, snow removal, etc.) that would normally be provided by the City. Dream's amended plan for fee-simple housing in the Phase 2 development would leave existing bare land condominiums such as ours in an economically disadvantageous situation. The new Phase 2 area would have full City services and no condominium fees; while existing bare land condos would have the same restricted City services, full property taxes, and condominium fees. This is clearly unfair and would lower property values in existing areas of Willows. Dream will say that the older areas can become fee simple too, but this is almost impossible to achieve since it requires unanimous support from homeowners. It makes more

sense that the new areas be bare land condominiums as well. Why would the City want to take on the additional cost of providing full services in Phase 2?

Environmental Concerns: Dream's amended plan would see a great deal of golf course green space, ponds, and trees turned into housing, much of it home to geese, ducks, many varieties of birds, moose, fox, deer, and even mink.

MPC Process: At the October 26 MPC meeting, the Chair did not provide an opportunity for members of the MPC to vote in the affirmative for the motion to support Dream's amended plan. Only dissenting votes were requested, and one person dissented. That person was then asked by the Chair to explain the reasons for their vote, which may very well have intimidated other MPC members from dissenting. If there was never an affirmative vote requested, has the MPC actually supported City Planning's recommendation?

Lack of Consultation: Dream has claimed it engaged in community consultation, but it did not. They point to an 'Advisory Committee' that existed for a couple of years up until 2019, but this committee was only concerned with the operations of the golf course and its associated services. The plan Dream was actively working on to drastically alter our community was never presented to the Advisory Committee, even though Dream had planned it since at least 2017 (see Stantec's 2017 Traffic Impact Assessment for Dream that is part of the package on the City's Engage Page). If Dream did wish to consult, they only needed to approach the boards of the various condominium corporations at Willows. That never happened until after the amended plan was announced at the end of 2020. Since that announcement, Dream has continued to ignore the wishes of residents. Meaningful community consultation has been lacking, and the changes Dream has made to its original proposed amendment have been minor.

Golf Course Management: At the MPC Dream suggested that these changes were necessary because the golf course has been losing money. Has Dream provided financial documents to prove this? A source very close to the golf course has told me that over the last two years the course actually turned a small profit. Dream's response to that was to fire the General Manager. I believe that the golf course and the restaurant are underperforming due to poor management by Dream. The restaurant has one of the best locations in the city, and possibly the nicest patio around in the summer, yet it is empty. They are developers, not golf course managers. Does the city plan to continuously bail other companies out of their own financial trouble due to poor management at the expense of residents? If Dream were a struggling car dealership would we be having this same conversation. Further complicating this situation, how can it make sense to anyone to put a hotel with its own restaurant across the parking lot from Dream's own that they say is failing?

At least 80% of Willows residents are opposed to Dream's amended plan, and that plan would take away specific aspects of the Willows neighbourhood that were marketed and promised to home buyers by Dream itself prior to December 2020. I strongly urge the City Council to recommend against any changes to the DCD4 or the OCP and to also recommend rejection of the drastic changes to Willows contained in Dream's amended plan. Only you can stop Dream's plan. If you do, then Dream will be put in a situation where it will finally have to consult with homeowners. Most of us are not opposed to some changes to the 2003 community plan. We are reasonable people, but Dream has so far proven to be unreasonable.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind Regards,

Alexandra Jewell

█ -404 Cartwright street
Saskatoon sk