

Lowertown Community Association

L'Association communautaire de la Basse-Ville

MEETING NOTES / NOTES DE RÉUNION – 14 JANUARY 2013 / 14 JANVIER 2013
ROUTHIER COMMUNITY CENTRE @ 7 PM / CENTRE COMMUNAUTAIRE ROUTHIER à 19h

Board members present: Marc Aubin (President), Leah Fleetwood (Vice President), Sylvie Grenier (Director, Planning Committee), Steve Monuk (Director, Business Liaison), Vera Etches (Director, Membership/Volunteers), Sarah Bonesteel (Secretary).

Total community members present: 30

1. Welcome Remarks / Mots de bienvenue (Marc Aubin)
 - Introductions of board members.
 - Adélard Pigeon passed away this weekend. His family moved to Lowertown in the 1880s and lived at several addresses on Cathcart Street.
 2. Approval of Agenda and notes from last meeting / Approbation de l'Ordre du jour et notes de la dernière réunion (Marc Aubin)
 - Approval of agenda. David Jeanes was removed from the agenda and will present at the February meeting instead.
 - Approval of notes from the December 2012 meeting.
 3. Councillor's Office Update / Mise à jour du Bureau du conseiller
 - Present from the Councillor's office: Alanna Dale Hill and Mat Genest
 - Conflict of interest with Claridge files: This is a grey area because the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act is grey on this issue. The Councillor cannot influence any votes involving Claridge and cannot state a position on any Claridge projects. The Councillor's Office can respond to basic questions about the development process and refer questions to the relevant city planner. Councillors Hume and Harder have been designated as the Councillors to represent our Ward on Claridge files. On Claridge projects, the LCA can continue to send questions to Councillor Fleury's staff, which they will direct as appropriate to the City planner, developer or other councillors. The LCA can also ask questions of the City planner directly.
 - Development process (not specific to Claridge files): Submission of a proposed project begins the of 30 day consultation period. Pre-consultation is not required and not all developers choose to engage in this. After closure of consultation period, Councillor (or designate) may get involved to facilitate discussions between the developer and community groups.
 - Sussex Reconstruction: The Councillor's Office has received no news on this since last month. The National Capital Commission (NCC) is still working on the options, including re-looking at some of the original options. The Councillor's Office thinks there is likely to be an update available soon. There will be a public open house once the options are identified.
- Action Item:** LCA asked the Councillor's Office to find out if the LCA could be consulted on the options before they are presented to the Planning Committee.

-211 Clarence Street: Heritage staff provided input on this project in summer 2011. The building is not within the boundaries of the heritage district and the building was not on the designated heritage list. The proposed project includes several variances, including a request for permission to demolish and rebuild. Heritage staff did not raise any objections. The proposed project is still subject to site plan approval, which the developer has not yet submitted. At this point, the owner needs to apply for site plan approval to move the project forward.

The Councillor's Office is aware of the current property standards issues and Nathaniel Mullin visited the site with by-law officials. The Councillor's Office encourages the community to report infractions to 311.

-Ouellette/Brannan Houses Restoration Project:

Action Item: The Councillor's Office will set up a meeting between the LCA and City parks staff to obtain a status update.

Meeting with Councillor's Office: The Councillor's Office agreed to meet with the LCA board.

Action Item: the LCA Secretary will follow up with the Councillor's Office to coordinate the meeting after the LCA meeting in February.

-Heavy Snow: Following the heavy snowfall several weeks ago, 311 received complaints about the state of roads in Lowertown. These complaints have been addressed with city staff. It is recognized by the staff and Councillor's Office that Lowertown streets tend to be narrow and need snow removed quickly. Snow removal in Lowertown West was contracted out by the City so it is harder to control when it happens. In future years, Lowertown West snow removal will remain a responsibility of City staff to provide more control over response times.

4. BIA Update / Mise à jour de la ZAC (Jasna Jennings)

-In Jasna's absence, Steve Monuk, LCA Business Liaison, provided an update: 1 February 2013 is the Byward Market BIA's annual stew cook off. Last year, this event raised \$7,000 for the Youth Services Bureau and to the Shepherds of Good Hope. The Shepherds used the funds to assist clients moving into housing. This year, the BIA is hoping to raise \$10,000.

5. Presentation on the Re-development of 137 and 141 George Street and 321 Dalhousie Street (Neil Malhotra, Claridge) / Présentation du nouvel aménagement du 137 et 141, rue George et du 321, rue Dalhousie (Neil Malhotra, Claridge)

-Present: Neil Malhotra, Claridge; Katherine Grechuta, Fotenn Planning and Urban Design; and Erin O'Connell, Urban Planner, City of Ottawa

-321 Dalhousie Street (Union du Canada Building): The proposed project will turn this into a boutique hotel. The main structure will be retained but the interior will be renovated and the exterior cladding will be changed. Extra stories will be added, making the building a total of 15 stories. The height increase is from 42m to 60m. The hotel will have 185 hotel rooms.

-This building is within the Heritage District so re-development plans will need approval of the Ottawa Built Architecture Committee (OBAC) before the project goes to the Planning Committee.

- Some parking will be located at the back of the building. The rest will be within the underground parking of the proposed new condominium building.
- During construction of the condo building, valet parking would be used to park cars in nearby lots. Claridge owns some lots and would develop agreements with other lot owners. This information is not included in the application.
- The two projects will have a shared courtyard.
- The Whiskey Bar building is not part of the re-development project.

-137 and 141 George Street: this is a mixed use project with commercial space at grade and 22 stories of condominiums. Zoning currently allows a building of 50m in height. Claridge is seeking a variance to increase this to 70m.

- The building will have an 11.4m (3 storeys) podium. The zoning is for a 10m podium but the adjacent buildings are 11.4m high. Claridge is asking for the additional 1.4m of podium height to match the height of the buildings adjacent to the condo building.
- The 3 storey podium provides a visual line with the surrounding structures.
- This building is not within the parliamentary view plane provisions but Katherine has factored these provisions into Fotenn's analysis of the proposed project. The project does not contravene the provisions.
- Fotenn is also considering provisions related to building height, set back and parking in their analysis and recommendation.
- Katherine's analysis looks at encroachment and what is appropriate for a project given its surroundings. They are recommending that the increased height request for the project is reasonable, given the height of nearby buildings and information in the City's official plan. This section of Lowertown is zoned for tall buildings. The St. George condos are 24 storeys.
- This project is not within the Heritage District so will not need OBAC approval before going to the Planning Committee.
- Claridge is planning that the building will have a similar look and feel as the surrounding buildings at the street level (to continue the height of the podium).

- The development plans for both projects are available online at the City of Ottawa website.
- City planners do not review development plans before they are posted online. Plans are posted as they are received and are reviewed by planners and the public at the same time.
- Claridge's planned timeline is to start construction on the hotel in summer 2013 and construction on the condo building near the end of 2014 or in early 2015.
- Claridge is not applying for affordable housing reductions. The condo prices are expected to be similar to the recently built condos on Rideau Street.
- The provincial and City development policies advocates for dense development in downtown areas.
- Neil Malhotra indicated that, if requested, he could another LCA meeting in future to further discuss the projects.
- The City is planning a public meeting about the projects. This will likely be held the last week in January. Comments from the public are due January 28 but the date will be extended (if needed) based on the date of the public meeting.

-Action Items: Community member asked Katherine for evaluation of building height from the Main Market Square. She will look into preparing this.

-Community member asked Katherine to provide sun shadow analysis of condo building for December. She will look into preparing this.

-Community member asked that Councillor Fleury's staff leave the meeting because of Councillor Fleury's conflict of interest on Claridge files. Community member wanted to be able to speak freely. Councillor's Staff left the meeting.

-Marc thanked Neil and Katherine for attending the meeting.

-Erin O'Connell, Urban Planner, City of Ottawa:

-The provincial policy and City's Official Plan is two of the overall guiding documents used to assess and recommend projects for approval. The proposed condo project does include restrictions on parliamentary site lines. This project is outside of those lines.

-Zoning is not a static process. Amendments/updates are made regularly. Staff can recommend zoning changes if they are reasonable for the area.

-The zoning bylaw amendment request is made through the proposal.

-The Claridge proposal was received in December and is now out on "circulation" to the public. People have until 28 January 2013 to provide comments and ask questions. These can be sent directly to: Erin.o'connell@ottawa.ca.

-It is most helpful to city staff to provide suggestions and be specific; not to just provide comments.

-The proposal is also circulated internally with the City departments to parks, hydro, etc.

-The period for comment may be extended because of delays over the Christmas period.

-During this period, it is usual for the Planning staff to have some back and forth with the developer to address questions.

-The Planning staff will provide a recommendation to Planning Committee (Councillors) on the project.

-The staff recommendation becomes public ten days before the issue goes to the Planning Committee meeting.

-Once the project is considered by the Planning Committee, it goes to a full City Council meeting.

-The community can appeal City Council decisions to the Ontario Municipal Board.

-The current plan is for the Dalhousie hotel portion of the project to go to OBAC in February and then for both parts of the project to go the Planning Committee in March.

-If the project did not include a zoning amendment, it would just go through site plan control.

-Claridge has applied for the zoning amendment and site plan control at the same time.

-Site plan control approval is also a public process. It considers issues such as access, parking and landscaping. Approval for this is delegated down to planning staff. The issue does not go to the Planning Committee for approval. The Councillor always has the option to remove delegated authority from staff and ask that projects go to the Planning Committee for approval.

-Claridge's justification for the proposed extra height of both buildings will be in their proposal.

-City staff will analyze this and make a recommendation accordingly.

- Erin confirmed the likely increase in traffic, as well as parking and operations will be considered in her analysis. Claridge was required to submit a traffic analysis as part of their proposal.
- Zoning amendment requests are looked at individually. Decisions are not based on precedent or the percentage of change requested.
 - Erin's analysis will be more qualitative than quantitative and will look at the impacts.
- A community member asked if it is possible for the community to request a reduction to the allowable height maximums in the area. Erin confirmed that it was possible but would be challenging because of the city and province focus on intensification to deal with population increases. The provincial direction is for intensification to preserve agricultural land.
- Discussion followed about whether these projects are the ideal uses for this real estate or whether space should be preserved for Byward Market expansion.
- Community member asked how a planner decides when there is enough intensification. Erin responded that current plans look at likely population increases to 2031.
- Discussion about the Union du Canada building as an example of post Expo-67 ultra modern architecture.
 - Sally Coutts from the City of Ottawa is handling the heritage application.
 - The building is within the Heritage District but is not individually designated.
 - Not all information needed was provided with application so Sally's report may not be ready for OBAC in February, which would also delay the project being considered by the Planning Committee.
- Erin will be on leave beginning in early March and will be replaced by another planner.
- Councillors Hume and Harder are our designated representatives on Claridge files. We need to give them an opportunity to represent us. We could ask for another councillor, perhaps someone representing a more similar community, but should give the current designates a chance.
 - Erin confirmed that Councillors Harder and Hume did contact her to ask her to attend the meeting.
- People for Public Spaces report: a draft report was provided to the City in December but was not circulated to the BIA or LCA.
 - Erin agreed to see if she can look at the report before making her recommendation on the Claridge projects.
- Marc thanked Erin for attending the meeting.

6. Areas of Interest – Updates / Champs d'intérêt – Mise à jour:

- Parks and Recreation Update / Mise à jour des parcs et loisirs (Ice Rink Management / Gestion de la patinoire – Jordan Sinclair / Shay Purdy)
 - The rink is currently closed because of the warm weather. The rink was open for two days last week. The rink has ample volunteers this year. They have had one issue with building but it was resolved quickly by the City. The rink is open daily until 11pm. The rink is likely to re-open by the end of the week if the cold weather holds.

7. Events – Updates / Événements – Mise à jour:

- LCA involvement in Winterfest / Participation de l'ACBV au Festival d'hiver (Leah Fleetwood)

-Winterfest will be held on Family Day, 18 February 2013, from 1 to 4pm in Jules Morin Park.

-The event will include skating on the new rink, sleigh rides, hot chocolate, a bbq (needs volunteers), and bouncy castle.

-The event is looking for food donations.

-The Lowertown Community Resource Centre is hosting the event, with assistance from the LCA. The event was a great success last year and the LCA's participation was much appreciated.

Meeting adjourned 8:45pm

Next meeting date is 11 February 2013 / La prochaine réunion aura lieu le 11 février 2013