

ATTENDING

Mayor Mike Trinacty, Chair
Councillor Derrick Jamieson
Councillor Ty Walsh
Councillor Adam Lutz
Councillor Johanna Kwakernaak
Councillor Justin Serino
Councillor Chris Goddard
Jen Boyd, Chief Administrative Officer
Krista Longmire, Executive Assistant
Chrystal Fuller, BCP & C (Via zoom) joined at 6:48 pm

ALSO ATTENDING

22 Members of the Public (9 members present via Zoom)

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm

2. PUBLIC HEARING

a. Overview of the Proposal

CAO Boyd began the presentation with a background on the proposed development on Lot 1-AC off Commercial Street which began in June 2022. The application was initially for 83 units but revised to 120 units with underground parking. The site plan includes a paved driveway connection to Commercial Street and a gravel emergency access to Kathleen Court. A traffic study is not required at this time but will be needed when the development exceeds 60 units. It was noted that the developer must provide a detailed stormwater management plan at the time of permitting. Planner Fuller completed the presentation when she arrived.

b. Comments from Developer – Nick Bentley (attached)

Mayor Trinacty read the comments that was received from the Developer, Nick Bentley.

c. Public Input

Greg Henderson, 142 Commercial Street

- Traffic concerns getting onto Commercial Street from the development
- Steep grade out of the driveway, creating visibility issues
- Snow clearing
- Pedestrians using the driveway along with vehicles
- Access to the development from Ron Smith Drive would make sense
- Concerns about the wastewater/sewage and if the current lines can handle the increase

Kelly Fisher, 231 Main Street

- Would like a better understanding of what the signage for pedestrians as stated in the development agreement would be or if there were any guidelines for this.

Tina Henderson, 142 Commercial Street

- Concerns about the water with the additional units
- Concerns about the driveway being directly across from Georgetown Lane, everyone trying to access Commercial Street and pedestrians accessing/using the sidewalks – poor visibility

Bonnie Ells, 5 Georgetown Lane

- Concerns with the sidewalks not being maintained and forcing people to walk on the road
- Vehicles aren't yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks and recommends crosswalk flags

Jim Murray, 7 Georgetown Lane

- Same concerns that have been previously addressed
- Vehicles are not adhering to the posted speed limits on Commercial Street
- Concerned about the increased traffic on Commercial Street and not being able to exit the driveway at peak times
- Increase in noise to neighbouring properties

Maureen Eagles-Aalders, 139 South Street

- Concerned that the driveway does not meet minimum standards
- Public safety concerns with the narrow driveway and two-way traffic
- Drainage concerns

David Longeron, 100 Maple Avenue

- Clarification on the potential connector road off Ron Smith Drive
- Using Kathleen Court as the access road instead of Commercial Street if the development was smaller than the proposed 120 units
- Feels the Town is putting high density where it should be low density

George Floris, 198 Lawrence Road

- Concerns about the road frontage for the development and why it is different from other properties in Town

Melvin Hart, 10 Autumn Drive

- Concerns with traffic and speed on Commercial Street
- Concerns with moving the access to the development to Ron Smith Drive, it only has a one entry, one exit road.
- Feels the development is being shoehorned

d. Written Submissions (attached)

- i. Christine Neilson, 118 Cottage Street

9. ADJOURNMENT

**IT WAS REGULARLY MOVED AND SECONDED THAT THE REGULAR MEETING
BE ADJOURNED AT 7:52 PM**

MOTION CARRIED

Approved by Town Council

As recorded by Krista Longmire, Executive Assistant

My comments to share:

This project was conceptualized by Fathom Studio with the project scope of designing what makes sense for this parcel and the surrounding community. By concentrating the density onto the smaller 7 acre parcel and incorporating underground parking, it allows the adjacent forest and trail system to remain in tact. This design offers much needed housing solutions with minimal impact on the surrounding landscape and helps to diversify the housing options within the Town.

We are excited for the potential to bring this project to life and continue building in the Town of Berwick.

Thank you to staff and council for consideration of this Development Agreement and best of luck with reaching a final decision.

Nick Bentley

I am writing concerning the development at Lot 1-AC Commercial St.

I will state from the outset that I support the development and believe that it will be an asset to the Town. But I do not believe that Council should approve the development agreement in its current form. My concerns are focussed on deficiencies with respect to active transportation. The private access road from Commercial will be unsafe for pedestrians (especially children) and those who use mobility scooters. All of Berwick's residents should be treated with respect and offered the same opportunities. But this development presumes that automobiles will be the preferred means of transportation. That is interesting in light of the 'pitch' that the units will be close to shopping, educational and cultural resources as well as transportation links. I understand the pressure to approve a project which will provide both much needed housing and tax revenue. But I believe that a decision to support this plan in its current form is the beginning of a slippery slope. What preventable risks will be ignored on the next project, and the next?

I have the following specific concerns, questions, and comments. These are predicated on what I have read in the staff report and draft development agreement (DDA) as well as discussions with people who attended the most recent Planning Advisory Committee meeting where this project was considered.

1. In the current plan the access corridor is too narrow to permit the construction of a separated sidewalk of sufficient width. The result is that all non-motorists will have to mix with the automobiles. This issue is compounded by the recommendation that the travel width of the road be reduced to 6 m. The staff report comments that the narrow width will make snow clearing difficult which I think will compound problems for pedestrians.

2. As I understand it, children who reside in the units will be required to walk to school. Within the development they will be able to move without vigilance on properly designed and separated sidewalks. But for the final 525 ft of their walk to Commercial St they will have to mix with vehicular traffic. This change in circumstances will be difficult for all pedestrians and users of mobility scooters but I suggest that it will be particularly problematic for children. The alternative to children walking is that parents will drive them to school. This will increase local traffic on both the access road and Commercial St.

3. The staff report makes a reference to the corridor being too narrow for power poles. Does this also mean that it will be too narrow for lighting standards? In that case the Town is setting up a situation where its residents are required to walk, mixing with vehicular traffic, in completely dark surroundings.

4. Clause 3.3.14 of the DDA references signage for speed control but gives no indication of why that signage would be considered effective. My experience in Berwick is that signage does not affect driver speed in almost all instances. It also references traffic calming measures but does not require them. These would passively enforce lower speeds and would likely be more effective than signage.

5. The access road will be a private road. 3.5.2 of the DDA requires that it be maintained during all seasons. When construction is complete what recourse does the Town have to ensure that this is the case?

6. DDA 3.3.12 mentions an opportunity to connect the development in question with an extension of Ron Smith Dr. This is a prospective plan and there is no guarantee that it will ever be completed. It will certainly not be done before a substantial number of people have moved into the first tranche of completed units. It therefore does not address immediate concerns about pedestrian safety.

7. Are there ways that the Town can expropriate or purchase sufficient land from neighbouring landowners to enable the construction of a road which meets the needs of all citizens?

8. In this era of climate change and financial instability it is even more important to ensure that services are accessible to individuals who either don't own/use an automobile or who choose not to. Berwick, with its already existing reputation for openness and innovation, should be a leader in demanding and providing services and systems which will stand the test of time.

In closing I believe that approval of this project should be delayed until measures are taken to mitigate risk to non-drivers who use the access road to Commercial St. I know that much thought has already been devoted to this issue by both town staff and the developer. In my opinion approval of the plan in its current form puts lives at risk and also creates a precedent for future projects. Council should redouble efforts to explore all alternatives to allowing this to happen. Among other things, the developer should engage qualified professionals in both transportation planning and active transportation planning who would be tasked to provide specific recommendations to address pedestrian safety and comfort while using the private access road. Their recommendations should then be incorporated into the final development agreement.

Christine Nielsen
118 Cottage St.