



## BMAHC Gateway Project Designs Task Force

### Meeting No. 1 Minutes/Action Items – November 10, 2020

- **Call to Order**

- Meeting called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Executive Director Sharon McCormick
- Attendees: Sharon McCormick, Olwen Bennett, Shawn Everitt, Steve Diamond, Jim Torrance, Garth Armour, Tovah Socha, Steve Simon, Barry Tatchell, Stacy Manning, Nadia Galati, Sara Udow, Trevor Houghton, Lyn Logan, Kim Harris, Steve Simon, Melri Wright, and Anne Marie Shaw
- Land Acknowledgement verbally stated by Sharon McCormick

- **Introduction; Roles and Responsibilities**

- Task Force set up to allow community to get involved with provision of attainable housing
- Survey done in 2019 to examine potential attainable housing sites, and Request for Information with development industry undertaken
- concept plan survey undertaken in 2020 which is a precursor to the Design Guidelines Task Force
- overview of Q4 2020, Q1 to Q3 2021 timeline for the Gateway Project, which includes due diligence for the site, community engagement, Request for Expression of Interest, open house and public meeting, and eventual Request for Proposal
- Task Force Mandate:
  - Assist the Attainable housing Corporation to develop design guidelines to be included in the Gateway Project RFP and form part of the selection of a design builder. Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments are decided by Council
  - Task Force members should report back to their respective groups and organizations to help advise
  - Work duration: November 2020, with Design Guidelines presented to the Attainable Housing Corporation Board December 3, 2020
- GOAL of the Task Force: - **achieve consensus**: No one disagrees with the design guidelines that are ultimately developed
- Task Force introductions:
  - Steve Simon**, Chamber of Commerce President and local resident – The Blue Mountains needs younger workers and families to support labour and economic demands

-**Barry Tatchell**, Climate Action Now Network (“CANN”) and local resident – Town declared a climate emergency last year, CANN’s hope is to have the Gateway Site exemplify sustainable building – CANN also has an interest in a number of other sustainability and climate-related issues

-**Stacy Manning**, Blue Mountain Resorts and Blue Mountain Village Association – catalyst for the Southern Georgian Bay Task Force due to lack of ability to fill recruitment positions – sat on Transit and Housing Committees that arose out of the work of the Southern Georgian Bay Task Force

-**Steve Diamond**, Bay Street East area resident, based in Toronto, his company Diamond Corp. is involved in attainable housing in the city and waterfront initiatives – hopes to discuss appropriate height and density and make recommendations for the project – Sharon clarified the height and density fit within a legislative guideline and the decision lies with Council. The design guidelines, once determined, would be applied to any height and density

-**Jim Torrance**, President of Blue Mountain Ratepayers Association – engaged with membership in the past 6-9 months to understand opinions relating to attainable housing, and provide education on attainable housing - position papers are provided by the Ratepayers Association on the subject of attainable housing, with some concern raised by the Ratepayers Association regarding height and density

-**Garth Armour**, Wellington/Louisa Street East/Arthur Street East resident – previous experience as a landscape architect, representing the immediate community’s interests and concerns as to how the Gateway Project will develop, hoping to blend current environmental parameters to make an interesting gateway site amidst a community that is undergoing rapid change – the community sees this as a chance to change the face of Thornbury and hoping to bring Thornbury back to something it once was

-**Tovah Socha**, works and lives in Thornbury – prospective tenant of the Gateway Site

### **Context Setting**

- Gateway Project Introduction
  - Sharon reviewed Housing spectrum – below-market rate housing (rental and ownership) for individuals who are unable to access market-rate housing – this is not affordable or social housing
  - housing and salary are not increasing at the same rate (average home price \$889,000 September 2020, income of \$165,000 required to qualify to buy) – this is unachievable for middle income earners

- Rental Rate: \$1,300 – \$2,000 for one, two, and three bedroom homes
- Rental properties often used for short-term accommodation purposes
- \$40,000 - \$100,000 annual income is the target group for attainable housing
- jobs within this income range: teachers, public service workers, construction trades, health care workers, chefs, etc.
- Grey County Housing Department
  - 997 units across Grey County
  - considered social housing and affordable housing
  - Grey County considers income range between \$30,000 - \$80,000 as Attainable Housing
  - Current Grey County Housing waitlist: 560 people (Grey County residents, a majority being seniors and non-seniors requesting 1 bedroom housing)
  - Most homes built in Grey County are single-family dwelling, despite demonstrated need for one-bedroom units based on community need
  - Durham Build: 15 one bedroom apartments, 11 affordable rent, 4 market rent – smaller build, sustainable and accessible, with considerations for age-in-place
  - Odawa Place – Owen Sound – focus on accessibility and age-in-place design (hydraulic lift countertops, raised toilets, wider hallways and doorways, showers, grab bars, edible gardens, energy efficiency)
  - 71 registrants on the waitlist for the Gateway
- Beaver Valley Outreach
  - struggling to find housing: local families who were renting and have lost housing, new families who want to move to the area, but cannot find affordable homes, employees who work virtually or in the service industry, youth who want to continue living in the area, or come back after post-secondary education, but cannot afford or find affordable homes, seniors who are being aged out of their homes
  - middle income housing helps to: offer communal housing options, tiny homes, financial support
- Planning and Development, Town of The Blue Mountains
  - overview of Planning Act: s.2, 3, 17 & 21, 34, and 41 will be of major interest as Council contemplates the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments that are under review
  - Community Improvement Plan to update the existing CIP in the commercial core areas, and focus on encouraging attainable housing
- Sustainability Committee, Town of The Blue Mountains
  - construction industry is a large contributor to CO<sub>2</sub>
  - Buildings not built to Zero Carbon will require retrofitting by 2050 to meet Canada's targets
  - Sustainable Path, 2010 fairly vague in actionable goals and outcomes

- Community Design Guidelines, 2012 encourages LEED certification, but it is not a requirement
- need a framework for sustainable, green development – cited BC Housing Design Guidelines and Construction Standards 2019
- key to sustainability: density and small units
- Recommend: the Task Force commits to sustainability as it contemplates design
- Economic Development Advisory Committee
  - Reviewed median age, primary driver in real estate in The Blue Mountains is “baby boomer” migration, The Blue Mountains is an older community with a shortage in workers – community harder to sustain without a younger population

### **The Gateway Project**

- The Gateway Project’s Story
  - 171 King Street – Former Foodland Site
  - 2.7 acre site, currently zoned Village Commercial (allows for ground floor commercial and multi-unit residential on upper levels)
  - Trees border the southern portion of the property
  - Property is near Thornbury Wastewater Treatment Plant, as such, a number of studies undertaken to understand potential impacts
  - Gateway project goals: high quality, attainable rental housing for moderate income earners with commercial space on ground floor – focus on sustainability and accessibility, and long-term, sustainable economic viability
  - LEED and Passive House Builds – cost more to get them certified? There is a cost premium for these types of programs because there are additional feature costs (i.e. insulation, windows, etc.) though efficiencies found in operating costs moving forward

### **Q&A**

- Town purchased 171 King Street, achieved 80% diversion from the Foodland building (created gravel which will be used on trails and in parking lots), stressed the clear dividing line between the Town and The Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corporation, Attainable Housing has been a significant priority for the Town and was clearly identified as a main priority during the 2018 Municipal and School Board Election
- Is there an income cap on the market units of the County developments?
  - Not on market, but on attainable
- Does County have financial role to play?
  - The County’s mandate from the Province is to focus on the Social Housing Waitlist

- When does parking get considered at the site?
  - Typically as part of the Zoning By-law application, this is a factor that needs to be considered for the Gateway Site as the planning process continues
- Caution that we cannot flood the market with commercial space, as commercial space can take some time to find renters
- Putting commercial in could make the process more difficult – could we consider the number of units and the height be amended with the commercial space removed from the building?
- Commercial is a way to try and subsidize the attainable rents – the other option is market rent units to help maintain a viable, attainable rent for those affordable units. Is there a financial viability consideration that can get laid over the design considerations?
  - Because the process is at an early stage, we can consider initial financial viability of features, but if the Task Force determines the most important features, a costing exercise can be undertaken at a later stage
  - Should review financial metrics when commercial units are removed
- Main Objective – attainable rental space – this needs to be the #1 criteria, and the community may have to compromise on a number of the other suggestions (i.e. height, green build parameters, etc.)
- Why is commercial space contemplated in the building?
  - In Official Plan and Zoning By-law – if ground floor is considered as residential, it would be contemplated through the Public Meeting process
  - Steve Simon noted there is not a huge commercial demand in Thornbury at this time – and Bruce Street should be to be the commercial hub of Thornbury
- Do any Grey County developments have mix commercial and residential?
  - Not in Grey County, but some buildings in Simcoe County have a blend of commercial and residential
- Do buildings get cheaper the more residential units they contain, i.e. does density make it more economical?
  - Not necessarily “cheaper”, but there are efficiencies that can be achieved, depending on the project-specific parameters
- Could the Task Force look at number of bedrooms, site plans, parking, can the Task Force come up with design guidelines that also encompass height/density/built form?

- Consultant brought in from Labour Task Force that did modelling for attainable housing rental units, without commercial, that indicated all units can be attainable – where does this modelling sit?
  - Will share the Labour Task Force modelling and report with the Design Guidelines Task Force
- Can the Task Force hear more on the background research already done?
  - Possibility of more commercial, market-place rental versus all attainable – the Task Force and BOard need to look at all possibilities
- 71 Gateway Site Registrants: is it the goal to find space in the building for all those individuals?
  - There will be a formal application process, at this time it's an expression of interest
  - There is plenty of demand if the housing is truly attainable

#### **Key Action Items**

- Follow-up survey, background reading materials, consult organizations and groups that are represented
- Financial modelling to consider viability with commercial space removed

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.