



STAFF REPORT

TO: Council **MEETING DATE:** June 16, 2015

FROM: André Boel, Director of Planning
Odete Pinho, Planning Consultant **FILE NO:** 3220-20 Gower 377-385

SUBJECT: George Hotel and Residences – Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw

RECOMMENDATION(S)

THAT the staff report regarding the Official Community Plan amendment application for the George Hotel and Residences be received;

AND THAT Council consider first reading of “George Hotel OCP Amendment Bylaw No. 985-19, 2015”.

PURPOSE

This report outlines the draft “George Hotel OCP Amendment Bylaw No. 985-19, 2015” for Council’s consideration (Appendix A). The OCP Amendment Bylaw proposes amending a policy in the Official Community Plan and Harbour Area Plan that would permit a residential building having up to 7 storeys and a hotel building having up to 8 storeys, at the George Hotel site. Moreover, one of the three policies regarding a waterfront linear park is proposed to be deleted. This staff report also summarises information regarding height and massing that were provided to Council earlier in the review process.

Furthermore, the applicant’s consulting team has been requested to attend the Council meeting and present the proponent’s analysis of building height reduction options as requested by Council on May 12, 2015. Also, a letter from the applicant to the Town dated June 2, 2015, regarding height reduction options has been attached to this report in Appendix B.

BACKGROUND

In February 2013, Klaus Fuerniss Enterprises Inc. submitted a Zoning Amendment application and Development Permit applications for the proposed “George Hotel and Residences” to allow for hotel, tourist commercial, marine and multifamily uses, consistent with the OCP’s Harbour Area Plan.

Since this zoning application was made in 2013, the Town updated the Official Community Plan (OCP) Bylaw No. 985, in March, 2015. The Official Community Plan now includes specific direction regarding the number of stories for new development. The *Local Government Act* requires that all land use decisions made by Council are consistent with current OCP policies and objectives.

Council is currently considering “George Hotel and Residences Zoning Amendment Bylaw 1065-33, 2015”. Council’s first reading for the zoning amendment bylaw was passed on May 12, 2015. Council adopted the following resolution (R2015-194):

THAT “George Hotel and Residences Zoning Amendment Bylaw 1065-33, 2015” be given first reading;

AND THAT consideration of second reading of “George Hotel and Residences Zoning Amendment Bylaw 1065-33, 2015” be subject to:

- *A substantive response from the applicant addressing the questions raised in the peer review reports by Levelton and Waterline, including but not limited to considering reduced excavation at the west side of the land portion and addressing gaps in data for the dredging area;*
- *An OCP amendment bylaw for Council’s consideration;*
- *A staff report regarding the results of the traffic and parking study with an overview of offsite improvements, community amenities, and Winn Road closure;*
- *A staff report regarding form and character changes in response to the geotechnical reviews;*
- *A draft development agreement including steps and timing for the development approval process and future construction of the project.*

AND FURTHER THAT consideration of an OCP Amendment regarding scale and character include detailed information in the proponent’s analysis of building height reduction options, and be subject to further negotiations between the Town and the proponent on the development agreement.

This report addresses the underlined request from Council for “an OCP Amendment Bylaw for Council’s consideration”. Also, in response to Council’s request for “detailed information in the proponent’s analysis of building height reduction options”, a presentation will be made by the applicant, and a letter was submitted to the Town on June 2, 2015, responding to Council’s request (Appendix B). Other topics contained in Council’s motion will be addressed in separate staff reports.

DISCUSSION

Below, this report outlines the proposed OCP Amendment Bylaw, followed by a summary of information regarding height and massing that were referenced earlier in the review process.

Harbour Area Plan Goals and Objectives

The Harbour Area Plan was completed in 2012. The development of the OCP's Harbour Area Plan was an informed evaluation that included residents and professional urban designers, land economists and transportation engineers, among others, to inform the policies for future development of the area. Balancing objectives for a vibrant and varied economy, while protecting the 'village character' is reflected throughout in the Harbour Area Plan policies.

The OCP's Harbour Area Plan neighbourhood policies outline the following goals for the area. The *5 Harbour Area Plan goals* (in italics) are summarised with reference to the proposed George Hotel and Residences development attributes below:

1. *Retain the scale and character of the Harbour Area.*
Discussed under "Proposed OCP amendment".
2. *Make the waterfront fully accessible, physically and visually, retaining the sense of proximity to nature.*
A new public connection along the waterfront is being proposed and includes landscaping and foreshore habitat improvements.
3. *Ensure environmentally responsible and sustainable planning and development.*
The proposal includes plans for foreshore habitat improvements and protection of the aquifer.
4. *Support and enhance social and cultural activity in the Harbour Area.*
The proposed hotel / convention centre, including spa facilities, cafés and restaurant, in combination with the waterfront walkway has the potential to become a new destination for visitors and residents in the Landing.
5. *Ensure the economic viability of the Harbour area, recognizing the unique role the Harbour plays in the local economy and economic history of the area.*
The proposal adds tourism and residential uses to a currently underutilised area in the Landing and maintains the fuel dock service that is currently in place.

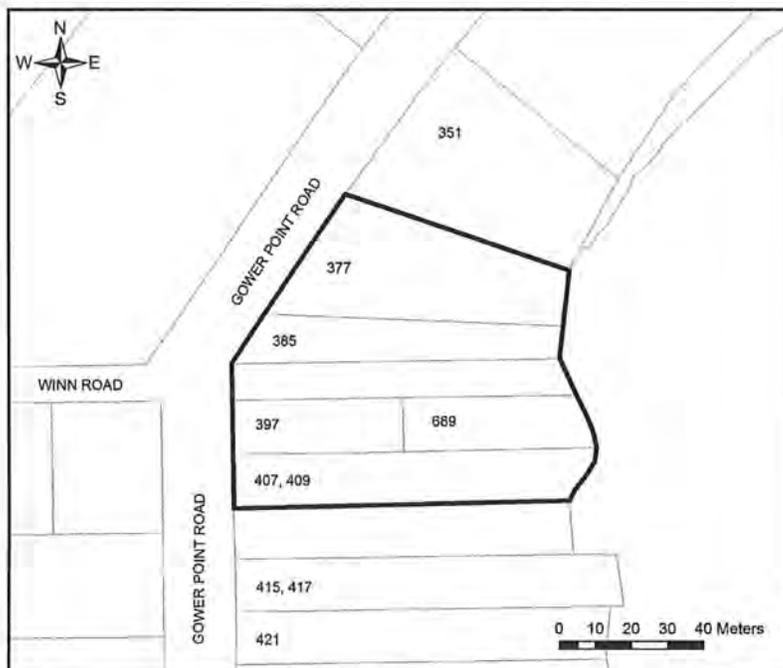
Proposed OCP Amendment

With the completion of the OCP update project on March 17, 2015, a new policy was added to the OCP's Harbour Area Plan, giving general guidance to the number of storeys for new development:

" 5.1.2 In order to maintain a village scale and character in Gibsons Harbour area, building heights should be limited to 1 or 2 storeys on the higher side of the lot and 3 to 4 storeys as seen from the lower side of the lot depending on the degree of slope. Exceptions to this may be considered through an OCP Amendment on a case by case basis. "

The site of the proposed George Hotel and Residences has been identified as a site where an exception to this general guidance will be considered. In the proposed OCP Amendment Bylaw, the current policy is updated by defining an exception for height, specifically for this site as follows: (underlining indicates changes):

" 5.1.2 In order to maintain a village scale and character in Gibsons Harbour area, building heights should be limited to 1 or 2 storeys on the higher side of the lot and 3 to 4 storeys as seen from the lower side of the lot depending on the degree of slope, with the exception of the site east of Gower Point Road, identified on the map below, where a residential building may have up to 7 storeys and a hotel building may have up to 8 storeys, in each case as seen from the lower portion of the site. Additional exceptions may be considered through an OCP Amendment on a case by case basis."



File No.: 20150501
Date : May 2015

Figure 1: Site east of Gower Point Road where proposed OCP Amendment exception for building height and number of storeys (policy 5.1.2.) applies.

A second change to the OCP relates to the policies around the linear park and walkway along the Harbour. The current OCP contains three policies regarding this linear park. One of the policies references the acquisition of land in public ownership, whereas the two other policies allow for other solutions to secure public access along the waterfront.

In the case of the George proposal, the proposed linear park and walkway are largely located on the Crown foreshore, on lands not under control of the applicant. This means the applicant is not in a position to transfer ownership of the lands for the linear park to the Town. The Province would need to authorise the proposed habitat improvements and walkway. For this reason, the OCP Amendment Bylaw includes the proposed deletion of policy 5.1.5 while the two other policies (6.2.7 and Harbour Area Plan section 5.6) remain in place.

In Part B, section 6.2 Environmental Protection (Smart Plan page 29):

“6.2.7 Acquire through purchase or by dedication as park or by other creative arrangement, environmentally valuable land, riparian areas, sensitive marine backshore areas, including streams and watercourses and establish a network of natural trails and viewpoints throughout the Town.”

In Part E, section 5.1 Land Use Plan (Harbour Area Plan page 28):

“5.1.5 Acquire and secure land in public ownership for a waterfront linear park between Winegarden Park and the Marina Lands, in the location generally indicated on the Land Use Plan Map.”

In Part E, section 5.6 Cultural Facilities and Amenities (Harbour Area Plan page 41):

“Acquire a right of way, through amenity contribution, density bonusing, or purchase of land along the waterfront, a minimum of 15 metres in width, for a linear waterfront park joining the current park adjacent to Gibsons Marina to Winegarden Park.”

Design changes overview

Since the initial George Hotel and Residences application was received by the Town in February 2013, the applicant has made modifications to the proposed buildings massing and design. The Town has received three iterations of the currently proposed design, as summarized below.



Table 1. Overview of design changes overtime

Earlier Information Regarding Proposed Height and Massing

Below follows a summary of height and massing information referenced and discussed at earlier stages of the review.

- 1) Massing and 3D Model - submitted by applicant February 2013
- 2) Advisory Planning Commission Recommendations – November 2013
- 3) Visualizations Commissioned by Town - February 2014
- 4) Geotechnical Report – design revisions submitted by applicant February 2015

1) Massing and 3D Model

The initial February 2013 proposal was added to the Town's 3D model of the Harbour Area, to illustrate the massing and height of the proposal in relation to the expected future buildout of the area. The Town's 3D model is also referenced in the Harbour Area Plan in section 5.1 (Harbour Area Plan page 29, figures 5-3 and 5-4). The model was commissioned by the Town to inform future development of the Harbour Area. The figures reflect a direction toward future added infill development and density in Gibsons Landing, while retaining view corridors of the waterfront.



Figure 2: Harbour Area Plan Fig. 5-3: Existing Development in the Harbour Area (2011)



Figure 3: Harbour Area Plan Fig. 5-4: Potential Future Development in the Harbour Area

As part of the initial application in February 2013, the applicant provided a computer generated 3D visualization. This visualization used the Harbour Area Plan model by projecting the proposed hotel and residences onto the anticipated buildout of the area.



Figure 4: screenshot of the 3D visualisation of the initial proposed design (March 2013), projected onto future buildout in the area.

2) Advisory Planning Commission Recommendations

Following staff feedback, the applicant changed architects and had the project redesigned. The updated design (October 2013) featured 2 separate buildings with a plaza and view corridor through the center. At the November 15, 2013 meeting of the APC, the revised design was reviewed and the APC made 12 recommendations related to the scale, massing and character of the proposed development. As a result of the APC recommendations, the applicant further revised the building design in December 2013 (see March 25, 2014 staff report).

Key changes in response to the APC recommendations were:

- Modulation of roof heights on the hotel building
- Stepping down of the hotel's Gower Point Road façade
- Marina restaurant design changes to incorporate historical style design elements
- Design changes to building facades adjacent to the waterfront walkway
- Public lookout platform next to restaurant
- Additional habitat areas in front of Winegarden Park

3) Visualizations

On January 21, 2014, Council directed staff to “arrange for further visual information on the project, with eye-level illustrations from various vantage points”. The Town retained independent consultant Chris Foyd (BA/MArch/Arkitekt MAA Denmark, RAIC) to complete the visual assessment. Council received a staff report on the Gibsons Harbour Development Permit Area for form and character (DP-2013-01), for the George Hotel and Residences, dated March 25, 2014. On this date, Council reviewed results from visualisations of the proposed buildings that were produced by the independent consultant.

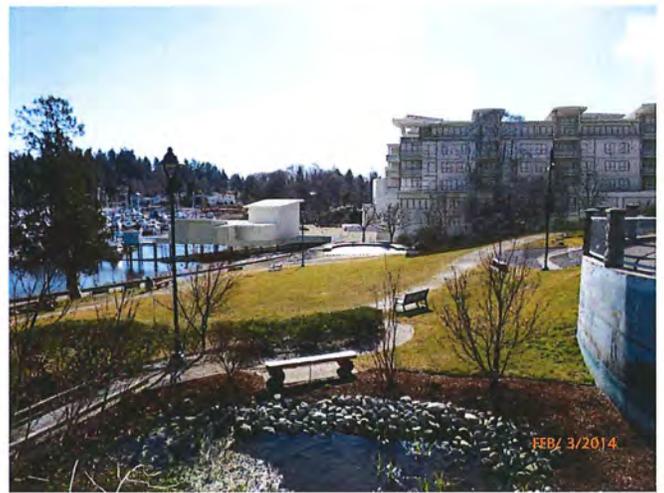
Six photographs were selected for the most publicly accessible ‘view impacts’ to the Harbour Area. The visual assessment images were produced for six view overlays of the proposed hotel and residences. The visual assessment images accurately represented the mass and height for the proposed development, as it would be seen from the view points at eye-level. The digital model images did not include architectural materials and colours that would reflect the design ‘look and feel’ of the development. The visualizations showed only the correct mass of the proposed development in relation to the existing surrounding area.



Figure 5: Six Visualization Photo Location Points

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Figures 6-11: Visualization Images (top to bottom; left to right): near Smitty's Oyster House; Wharf Gazebo; Winn Rd at Abbs; Headlands Rd Beach; Holland Lands stairs; Gower Point Road. Please note, these visualizations do not show the proposed colours and materials.



4) Geotechnical Report

The applicant has recently made modifications to the proposed buildings and parkade in response to the geotechnical recommendations of the Horizon Engineering report. The current design drawings submitted by the applicants architect, Omicron, are marked “draft in progress”, dated February 17, 2015. Information on changes to building heights was provided to Council in a staff report for the George Hotel and Residences Zoning Amendment Bylaw 1065-33, 2015, dated May 12, 2015.

With the recent design revisions, the number of storeys for the proposed development has not changed since the December 2013 design concept. The residential building would have up to 7 storeys and the hotel building would have up to 8 storeys. At the same time, changes have been made underground to the elevation of the parkade levels in response to the geotechnical report. The architect made adjustments to building floor heights in order to ensure that the additional height of the buildings still fits within the originally requested height maximum of 124’4” geodetic.



Figure 12: Visualization prepared by applicant, based on February 2015 Concept Plan, also illustrating changes to Gower Point Road façade in response to APC comments.

	Proposed height to average natural grade (as measured from 6.36 m geodetic)	Proposed height to Canadian geodetic datum	Increase compared to previous December 2013 design
Floor of level P2	-0.03 m (0.0 ft)	6.33 m (20.83 ft)	Up 3.34 m (11')
Residential building	25.05 m (82.4 ft.)	31.41 m (103'4")	Up 2.15 m (7'1")
Hotel building	31.44 m (103.42 ft.)	37.80 m (124'4")	Up 1.22 m (4')

Table 2. Changes in elevation and height in response to the geotechnical investigations.

NEXT STEPS

The "George Hotel OCP Amendment Bylaw No. 985-19, 2015" and the "George Hotel and Residences Zoning Amendment Bylaw 1065-33, 2015" may advance as parallel processes in their review and Council's consideration. Council's first reading for the Zoning Amendment Bylaw was passed on May 12, 2015, along with conditions required prior to Council's consideration of second reading. Council's consideration of second reading of "George Hotel and Residences Zoning Amendment Bylaw 1065-33, 2015" is subject to:

- *A substantive response from the applicant addressing the questions raised in the peer review reports by Levelton and Waterline, including but not limited to considering reduced excavation at the west side of the land portion and addressing gaps in data for the dredging area;*
- *A staff report regarding the results of the traffic and parking study with an overview of offsite improvements, community amenities, and Winn Road closure;*
- *A staff report regarding form and character changes in response to the geotechnical reviews;*
- *A draft development agreement including steps and timing for the development approval process and future construction of the project.*

After these items are completed, the development agreement would identify all the steps for the various approval processes that would eventually allow for the construction of the project. The agreement would also solidify discussions about development contributions for community amenities and affordable housing as part of the zoning process. A public information meeting and Public Hearing, organized by the Town, would follow, to ensure the community is informed about the Zoning Bylaw and development agreement.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this report has provided Council with the following information:

- Following Council direction, an OCP Amendment has been prepared;
- The OCP Amendment proposes an exception to allow for additional storeys on this site;
- The OCP Amendment proposes to delete one of three policies regarding the linear park and walkway;
- At the time of the initial application, the applicant provided a digital 3D visualisation projecting the proposed hotel and residences onto the expected buildout in the area;
- In response to staff feedback the applicant redesigned the project moving away from the initial single building design to a design with 2 buildings separated by a plaza and view corridor;
- In response to Advisory Planning Commission recommendations, the applicant updated the design of the hotel building, the marina restaurant and the facades and areas along the waterfront walkway;
- In response to the geotechnical investigations, the applicant made changes to the elevation of the underground parkade levels, while limiting the resulting height increase through changes to floor heights throughout the buildings;

- If supported, the OCP Amendment Bylaw would be processed parallel with the Zoning Amendment bylaw for the George Hotel and Residences.

RECOMMENDATIONS / ALTERNATIVES

Staff recommendations are listed on page 1. Alternative recommendations are listed below.

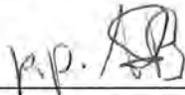
Alternatively, if Council would like to request further changes to the proposed height:

That the applicant for the George Hotel and Residences be requested to revise the proposed building height in order to address the following Council concerns....

Respectfully Submitted,



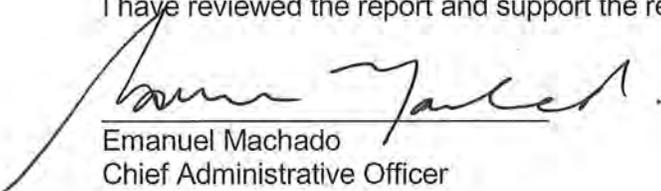
André Boel, RPP
Director of Planning



Odete Pinho, RPP
Planning Consultant

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S COMMENTS:

I have reviewed the report and support the recommendation(s).



Emanuel Machado
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Proposed "George Hotel OCP Amendment Bylaw No. 985-19, 2015"
- B. Letter from Klaus Fuerniss Enterprises Inc., dated June 2, 2015

TOWN OF GIBSONS

BYLAW NO. 985-19, 2015

A Bylaw to amend Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 985, 2005

WHEREAS the Council for the Town of Gibsons has adopted Town of Gibsons Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 985, 2005;

AND WHEREAS the Council for the Town of Gibsons deems it desirable to amend the Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 985, 2005;

NOW THEREFORE the Council for the Town of Gibsons, in open meeting assembled, enacts as follows:

1. **THAT** this Bylaw may be cited as "George Hotel OCP Amendment Bylaw No. 985-19, 2015".
2. **THAT** Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 985, 2005, Part E Harbour Area Plan, section 5 Plan Policies is amended by replacing policy 5.1.2 with the following:

" 5.1.2 In order to maintain a village scale and character in Gibsons Harbour area, building heights should be limited to 1 or 2 storeys on the higher side of the lot and 3 to 4 storeys as seen from the lower side of the lot depending on the degree of slope, with the exception of the site east of Gower Point Road identified on the map below, where a residential building may have up to 7 storeys and a hotel building may have up to 8 storeys, in each case as seen from the lower portion of the site. Additional exceptions may be considered through an OCP amendment on a case by case basis."
4. **THAT** Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 985, 2005, Part E Harbour Area Plan, section 5 Plan Policies is amended by including as part of policy 5.1.2 the explanatory map attached as Schedule 1 to this amendment bylaw.
5. **THAT** Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 985, 2005, Part E Harbour Area Plan, section 5 Plan Policies is amended by deleting policy 5.1.5. (Explanatory note: other policies for a linear park are already listed in Part B Policies, policy 6.2.7 and in Part E Harbour Area Plan, Section 5.6 under Cultural Facilities and Amenities, 4th bullet.)
6. **THAT** Bylaw No. 985, 2005 be further amended by making such consequential alterations and annotations as are required to give effect to this amending bylaw, including renumbering of subsequent provisions of the Bylaw.

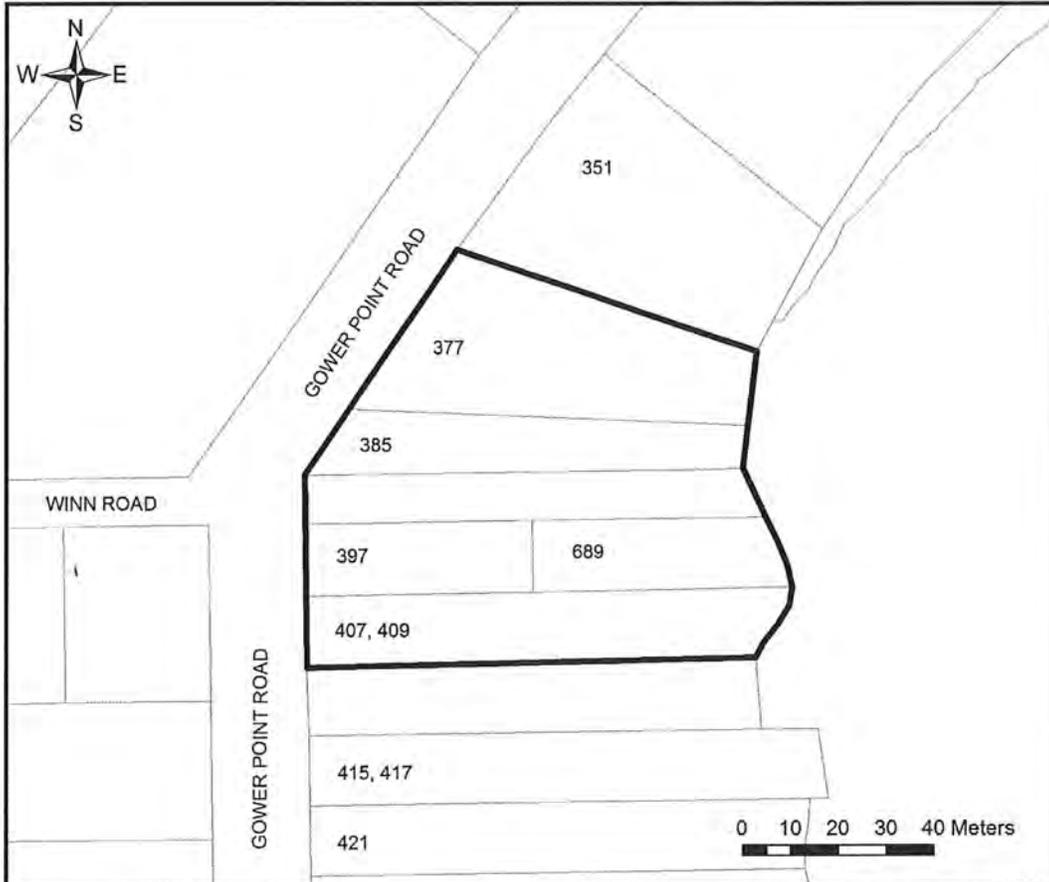
READ a first time this the	day of	2015
PUBLIC HEARING held this the	day of	2015
READ a second time this the	day of	2015
READ a third time this the	day of	2015
ADOPTED this the	day of	2015

Wayne Rowe, Mayor

Selina, Williams, Corporate Officer

Schedule "1"

Site east of Gower Point Road where exception for number of storeys (policy 5.1.2.) applies

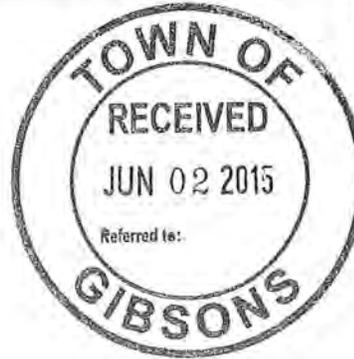


File No.: 20150501
Date : May 2015

KLAUS FUERNISS

Enterprises Inc.

June 2, 2015
Town of Gibsons
474 South Fletcher Road
Gibsons, B.C. V0N 1V0
Attention: Emanuel Machado,
Chief Administrative Officer



Dear Sir:

**RE: MAY 12, 2015 GEORGE HOTEL & RESIDENCES FIRST READING
OF BYLAW**

I write with regard to the discussion amongst the Councillors prior to the passing of first reading. While the majority of the Councillors were not sitting in office when we filed the rezoning application, I thought that we had explained how the building height was arrived at and what measures we have taken to reduce the height.

At the start of the rezoning process I instructed my architect to work closely with the consultant team and Town staff in developing a program that respects the character of the Town while at the same time meets the requirements for a five star hotel. There are many elements to the hotel that are crucial to its success, from the range of services offered to the staffing levels as well as the ceiling heights in each of the floors. The design of the hotel has taken into consideration masking of the underground parking, an inviting public plaza that will bring pedestrians from Gower Point Road down to the seawall and a welcoming waterfront space. The hotel consultant and the health and wellness centre consultant advised me on the requirements of a five star hotel and what is necessary to ensure its long term viability. If we are to be successful in attracting year round conferences, we must provide not only the facilities but the rooms to accommodate the delegates. I have already reduced the number of hotel rooms from what I was advised and any further reduction will result in our inability to attract conferences that will benefit the Town and the entire Coast.

From the start of the rezoning process, our consultant team has been cognizant of the importance of the aquifer and all efforts have been made to ensure its protection. The first geotechnical studies for the hotel and condominiums began in 2012 and my lead consultant has told me that the extent of analysis undertaken for a rezoning of this composition far surpasses any project that he has been involved in over the past 30 years. As we undertook more analysis at the request of the Town's consultants, it involved further changes to the design of the hotel and condominiums in order to provide a buffer between the foundation and the aquifer. The result was that the building design was raised in order to provide this protection and as a result I have had to compromise the potential classification of the hotel by reducing the floor to ceiling height of the hotel rooms, conference centre and health & wellness centre in order to minimize the increase in

height. The last analysis that was undertaken earlier this year resulted in a recommendation from my geotechnical consultant to raise the foundation levels once again and to restrict the extent of excavation in order to provide additional buffering of the aquifer. Our architect has followed the recommendations and this required her to redesign the entire underground parking structure which also entailed leaving the existing fill material adjacent to Gower Point Road in place and not to excavate it for the parking garage. In addition to the redesign of the underground garage, she also reduced the ceiling height within the garage to limit the increase in building height.

I asked her to summarize some of the changes and they are as follows:

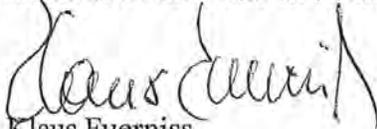
- Redesign the health & wellness centre and removed two units from 118 to 116.
- Redesigned the residential building which resulted in a decrease in units from 40 to 35 suites.
- Redesigned the front of the hotel along Gower Point Road to reduce the façade from six storeys to five storeys.
- Redesigned the parkade and loading bay area to incorporate the recommendations from the geotechnical engineer.
- Redesigned the parkade entrances, the plaza height, and the heights of both buildings to provide a transition from the Gower Point Road to the public plaza.
- Improved urban design at the street edge to respond to the existing road elevation, drop off entry sequence, provision of stepped landscape and “finer grained” details at street level.

Through redesign of the hotel and the residential suites I believe that I have been in a state of continual negotiation with Town staff to reduce the building height but I can no longer make changes without jeopardizing the entire project. From the start of the process I believe that I have demonstrated a willingness to work with staff, Council and the public in creating a project that will bring employment and economic benefits to the Town. Our architect has redesigned the project in excess of six times and we have reached a point where we cannot make any further changes through negotiation. I appreciate the comments that were offered on the night of May 12 regarding negotiating the building height but perhaps those that gave the comment were not aware of the extent of negotiations that has already taken place and how any further change will make it impossible for the George to operate as a destination hotel.

Please consider the contents of this letter and share it with Council at your earliest convenience.

Yours truly,

KLAUS FUERNISS ENTERPRISES INC.



Klaus Fuerniss
President