

Submission to Town of Gibsons

Regarding the Affordable Housing Development Proposal at 571 Shaw Road, Gibsons

From

O'Shea/Oceanmount Community Association (OOCA)

August 22, 2019

Response to a request for comments on the above noted Development:

Summary

Our comments are based on discussions and home visits with residents of those properties most affected by the proposed development as well as general comments and discussions with OOCA members.

Affordable Housing options are badly needed in Gibsons and our community is in favour of providing these at the 571 Shaw Rd. location. There are, however, some areas we believe should be addressed as this project proceeds.

1. Density – The use of units per sq. ft. of lot area as a measure of density has the potential to become confusing. Other developments utilize units per hectare and floor space ratio as measurements and these are the terms used in the Official Community Plan. We suggest that the OCP be amended to clarify how density is calculated in Gibsons. We now appear to have 3 different ways and this lack of clarity can make it difficult for the public to easily understand the implications.
2. Seniors – the property was initially intended for seniors living and while we understand the need for a broader potential usage, we believe there is support for designating a minimum percentage of the affordable housing for seniors, even if this is stated as a guideline.
3. Setbacks – the zoning amendment indicates the side setback to be only 4.5 meters. We recommend that this be increased in order to allow for a better “transition” from high density to low density areas. This would allow for more landscaping to screen the southern neighbours. It appears there is a plan to put a walkway at the southern portion of the property. We support that plan as long as it doesn't reduce privacy.
4. Existing trees. All the residents along the southern border of the property expressed a strong desire to retain the tree line (with appropriate culling) as a means of ensuring privacy. We recommend that the tree bylaw being discussed at the Town be fast tracked to ensure trees are not needlessly wiped out in the process of developing the property. We recommend the development retain the trees on the southern and eastern borders.

5. Landscaping – We support a robust landscaping plan that provides both a pleasing visual appearance and ensures privacy of surrounding homes.

4. Storm water management – we expect that in due course there will be a comprehensive storm water management plan. The property is currently retaining a great deal of the storm water and once it has been made impermeable with paving, etc., the storm water will need to be properly guided around the homes on the southern border to avoid flooding. The current water management is inadequate for the houses on the southern border – it doesn't provide a continual flow into the storm sewers. We recommend that the management of storm water be a high priority for the benefit of the surrounding property owners.

5. Proportion of Affordable Units – we understand that the project will be a mix of affordable and market priced units. The purpose of the project is to maximize the number of affordable units. We recommend the Town have some reasonable restriction on the number of market vs affordable units in order to prevent this development from transitioning into a predominantly market value project. It would be useful to have access to the business case for this project – i.e. the financial forecasts. We expect that Staff have already assured themselves that the project is viable on a long term sustaining basis without substantial/continual taxpayer support.

We understand that this is not the time to discuss form and character but await that discussion in due course.

If you should require any clarification or discussion of our comments, please contact the undersigned.

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William Baker

Director

O'Shea/Oceanmount Community Association