

Committee of Adjustment

From: Matt Wildeboer [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, November 4, 2020 2:19 PM
To: Committee of Adjustment
Subject: 455 Watson Parkway North (A-22/20)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Do not click links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

November 4, 2020

To: Trista Di Lullo, ACST
Secretary-Treasurer of the Committee of Adjustment

From: Matt Wildeboer
230 Severn Drive
Guelph ON N1E0C7

RE: 455 Watson Parkway North (Application Number: A-22/20)

I am submitting the following comments on the Application for Minor Variances for the vacant site located at 455 Watson Parkway North in Guelph (Application Number: A-22/20).

1. The applicant is seeking relief from the By-Law requirements to allow for a minimum of 10 waiting spaces for the proposed single bay automatic car wash. From my understanding, the site statistics listed on the proposed site plan show the By-Law requires 15 waiting spaces for the proposed car wash. With the average automatic touchless car wash lasting a duration of 3-5 minutes, this would require the 10th vehicle in line to wait for up to 30-50 minutes. According to By-Law Number (1998)-15945 Idling By-Law:

IDLING PROHIBITED [amended by By-law (2012)-19390]

3. (a) No person shall cause or permit a vehicle to idle for more than three (3) consecutive minutes;
(b) Notwithstanding Section 3(a), no person shall cause or permit a vehicle to idle for more than ten (10) minutes in any sixty-minute period.

Unless the property owner or property manager can ensure, regulate and enforce this By-Law, every vehicle waiting in line will be in violation of this By-Law. With the proposed car wash waiting area abutting two residential property lines, the amount of dangerous pollution imposed on these residential areas only emphasizes this hazard and endangerment of local residents.

2. The applicant is seeking relief from the By-Law requirements to permit an outdoor patio on a property where two lot lines adjoin lands in a residential zone. We request the committee seriously consider standing by this By-Law and not permit relief to the applicant. This By-Law is in place to protect these adjacent lands and the residents that call them home. This By-Law prevents unneeded and undesirable noise pollution, littering and both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. With the proposition of a gas station, car wash (abutting residential), retail and restaurant, an outdoor patio would only exacerbate the undesirable conditions this development would impose on the local residents.

3. Noise pollution raises adrenaline and cortisol hormones in the human body which, science has proven, contribute to high blood pressure and heart attack. Other negative health consequences of noise pollution include loss of sleep, increased stress and hearing loss. "According to information posted on the MTO Web site, the intensity of sound is measured in decibels. The human ear can detect a sound level change of one dB. If a sound level is increased by 10 dB, the ear perceives it as doubling in loudness." ("Being Driven to Distraction." NorthumberlandNews.com, 28 Nov. 2003, [http://www.northumberlandnews.com/news-story/3756952-being-driven-to-distraction/.](http://www.northumberlandnews.com/news-story/3756952-being-driven-to-distraction/)) Yes, the builder has proposed a 5-meter-high noise wall at the entrance and exit to the car wash, but the design flaws far outweigh the considered benefit.

First, the proposed wall only spans the abutting residential property lines of four individual residences. This leaves eight existing abutting residential properties, not to mention the entire abutting residential property line for a proposed condo building, exposed to the high decibel levels the car wash will produce.

Secondly, the proposed noise walls will have a very minimal benefit for the abutting residences. These homes are built on a sloping hill allowing the second floors to rise above these barriers. According to the original floor plans for these residences, they each have bedrooms situated at the rear of the house overlooking the proposed car wash. These bedrooms will be subject to constant noise from the entire proposed property. Children who nap regularly during the day and people working shift work are just two examples of who can be severely impacted by this noise pollution. Raising these walls higher would be a completely unacceptable alternative. Subjecting these residents to stare at nothing but a giant wall behind their homes would not only extremely decrease property values but would be detrimental to their way of life.

These walls have already caused the builder issues which resulted in their deferral request back on July 9th of this year. They were forced to convert two parking spaces into a "snow storage area". Extending the walls further on the horizontal to protect the remaining abutting existing residences would only add to their By-Law violations by decreasing their proposed parking spaces from 79 to 72 (By-Law requires 87 as shown in the chart on the right of the proposed site plan).

4. As stated above, the requested By-Law variance to permit less parking spaces than required will be problematic. This will not only impact the vehicle movement throughout the property but along Watson Parkway as well. This is the major thoroughfare for the east side of Guelph. As a resident who sees the traffic along Watson Parkway daily, it is very easy to foresee the traffic issues this proposed build will present. The speed limit along this stretch of Watson Parkway is 50KM/H and I can tell you from experience, as can the other residents of this neighbourhood, this speed limit is rarely adhered to. Although this is not an issue caused by the proposed build, the proposed build will not make it any better. Vehicles attempting to enter or exit the property at Watson Parkway will cause these other drivers to attempt to pass them in the other northbound lane. There are two northbound lanes at the location of the entrance to the proposed build. The right lane is designated for traffic turning eastbound onto Eastview Road as well as traffic continuing northbound on Watson Parkway. The left lane is designated for traffic turning westbound onto Eastview Road. This left-turn lane faces directly toward the southbound lane designated for traffic turning eastbound onto Eastview Road. On many occasions, as I have been in that southbound left-turn lane, I have had vehicles drive toward me at a high rate of speed travelling straight through the northbound left-turn lane. Fortunately, I have not been involved in an accident as a result of this but I have seen many over the years that we have lived at this location.

With less parking spaces than required as well as less waiting spaces for the proposed car wash, this will force vehicles to stop along Watson Parkway waiting to get into the property. As can be seen with the McDonald's location on Gordon Street in Guelph, not having enough space for a drive-thru or parking can result in dangerous and aggravating traffic congestion on adjoining roadways.

With not nearly enough parking available for the proposed build, customers will decide to park along Eastview Road causing traffic issues there, or as an alternative, they will travel around the block and park on Severn Drive, a quiet residential road, and take the pedestrian access in the northeast corner of the property. This will cause unwanted parking, traffic, noise and littering issues to the residents of this street. Not only that, but if traffic is bad enough on Watson Parkway because of congestion at 455 Watson, drivers will decide to turn onto Shackleton Drive then on Severn Drive to avoid the backlog. This not only is an inconvenience to local residents but a danger to the students travelling to and from École Guelph Lake Public School just down the road.

5. With many comparative businesses to those proposed for 455 Watson Parkway remaining open on a 24-hour basis, it can only be assumed that these new businesses would do the same. The amount of light pollution into the abutting residential properties would be astronomical. The Proposed Site Plan shows many sources of bright lighting. A 4.5 meter monument sign along Watson Parkway and another along Eastview Road, the gas bar canopy as well as pole lighting at the car wash entrance lane (approximately 9 meters from a residential property line) and at the parking spaces near the car wash exit (approximately 3.5 meters from a residential property line) are only a few of the absurd sources of light pollution this proposed build will impose on local residents. This light pollution will ruin the local view of the night sky, prevent local trees from adjusting to seasonal changes and cause unwanted light to trespass into abutting residential properties — lighting areas that would usually remain dark at night. Above all, this light pollution exposure for residents will disrupt their circadian rhythms and endocrine systems resulting in numerous negative health effects.

6. The proposed build also includes a propane fill station. Having a facility like this abutting residential property lines is extremely hazardous. There is the health risk of off-gassing propane and well as fire and explosion hazards. Other propane refill facilities in Guelph are situated away from residential areas and rightfully so. Proposing a facility like this in a residential neighbourhood is dangerous to both life and health. Frankly, proposing a gas station, car wash and propane refilling station abutting not only residential property lines but also so close to the preserved wetlands along Watson Parkway and Eastview Road, goes completely against Guelph's Community Plan. One of the common community values the plan covers is Environmental Stewardship stating "We're passionate about our green spaces and the beauty of our natural environment. We understand the crucial need to take care of it. We are proud to be environmental leaders, helping address pressing national and international concerns." (<https://guelph.ca/wp-content/uploads/Guelph-Community-Plan.pdf>) If the City of Guelph and its community members are truly passionate about Environmental Stewardship, this proposed built would not coincide with their Community Plan.

As I hope you can see from the points here mentioned in my letter, and from the numerous other letters you have received from other local residents, this proposed build at 455 Watson Parkway North is not only undesirable but unattainable for this location. I request that the Committee of Adjustment does not grant the applicant the variances from the By-Laws in which they seek.

Thank you for your time. I will be watching the remote hearing on Thursday, November 12, 2020, but I would also like to formally request to be notified of the decision of the City of Guelph Committee of Adjustment in respect of the proposed variance.

Regards,

Matt Wildeboer