

To: Mayor Guthrie, City Councillors, Staff

From: Reid Davis

Re: Additional Residential Dwelling Unit Bylaw Amendments

I wish to comment on the amendments coming before you on December 14th.

Please consider the following:

- **Affordable housing:** If the goal of allowing additional dwelling units to be built in back & side yards is to increase affordable mixed housing, this bylaw will fail. It is left to the private sector to determine where these units will be constructed and we all know that will be in student-heavy Wards 5 & 6. Who actually needs affordable housing options? Low-income working people are the most deserving but they will not be able to compete with students for these units and the additional dwellings will not be built in areas close to where they work or shop.

Recommendation: include some incentive for homeowners to construct backyard dwellings in wards outside the near-university neighbourhoods.

- **Height and Setbacks of Additional Dwelling Units:** Permitting 2 storeys for accessory dwellings is a recipe for disaster. As the report recommends 2-storey houses only 1.5 meters from an adjacent property, it is easy to foresee the complications, especially when they are student-occupied as those in my neighbourhood will inevitably be. The extra dwellings, which will be 3 meters from the existing house, but much closer to the fence, will loom over the gardens and patios of the near neighbours. Is it fair to existing home owners to be forced to accept the daytime shadowing, the night-time light and disruption from an accessory residence this tall and this close to the property line? It certainly doesn't feel fair to those of us who have diligently cared for our homes & gardens over decades and value our peace above all. Who is being catered to with these two regulations? They absolutely favour absentee landlords who already cause so much angst in

this area with their lack of courtesy for the neighbours and lack of respect for bylaws in place to regulate noise & property standards. It is fine to say that the accessory dwelling should not be higher than the primary dwelling but that's not where the impact will be. It will be on the neighbours beside and behind.

It is also worth noting that many properties in this area are elevated or lower relative to the neighbouring property. This can add significantly to the impact of two storeys.

Recommendation: Do not accept two storeys for height and 1.5 meters for setbacks. Single storey should be the maximum and increased setback is necessary for privacy and protection of green space.

- **Size of Dwelling:** The recommendation in the report is to allow dwellings of up to 80 square meters in size. We are accustomed to thinking of the size of our houses in square feet. This measure equates to a size of 861 square feet. There are many cottages and small homes in Guelph that are this size so please try to envision one of those houses plunked in your neighbour's back yard with the rear of it close to your patio, deck or vegetable garden. In my particular case, I would be forced to sell my house and move. It would be intolerable. I think I speak for many families and seniors in my neighbourhood who would follow suit if they have to contend with an extra dwelling of this size next door. That would leave the city with a neighbourhood full of investor-owned student-occupied rentals instead of a vibrant mix of seniors, families and singles. Is the risk worth it? While some yard sizes may not support 861 square foot dwellings, in many cases in my area, it definitely would.

Recommendation: Send this back to staff to reduce the size of dwelling permitted. 600 square feet is more than adequate and equivalent to the size of a small condo.

In conclusion, I ask that you seriously consider the implications for current residents with these proposed bylaw changes. Knowing that Guelph already has massive problems with student rentals including defiance of the bylaws we already have in place, it is most unwise to give such latitude to backyard additional dwellings.

As it stands, Building Services cannot even properly investigate and confirm lodging houses, most of which are not registered. You can and should take a stand here since rental properties are not licenced and bylaw enforcement is hampered by the rapid growth of the city. This is the time to plan for the future with prudence and not with a short-term fix to satisfy the provincial push for intensification.

Thank you for your consideration on this important matter.