

To: Mayor Guthrie, City Councillors & clerks@guelph.ca

From: McElderry Community Group

January 13/2021

As a community group that works to preserve the character and integrity of our own neighbourhoods, proposals for large-scale development in existing communities anywhere in the City of Guelph give us pause for thought. Is what is proposed in the best interests of the community overall or does it amount to over-development?

We wish to comment on the proposal to divide the Rolling Hills Community into two distinct sections thereby encouraging high density development in the north portion of the neighbourhood.

It is our contention that this is not in the best interest of the community for several reasons. Apart from the obvious loss of tree canopy, natural heritage features and the integrity of the existing planned community, we ask that you seriously consider the following:

Within the package before you is a report by Altus Group Economic Consulting. Page 10 of the Altus submission (page 102 of the agenda report) highlights the fact that the City of Guelph does not take into account the approximately 20 000 University of Guelph students who require housing off campus and therefore this demand increases the need for additional housing.

While we agree that appropriate housing is indeed inadequate for this cohort of students, it is primarily due to the fact that the City and the University have not devoted the necessary planning and resources to deal with this issue. As a result, you have transient students consistently occupying ground-level housing that was intended to accommodate permanent Guelph residents.

If you take into account the huge number of detached and row homes in Wards 5 & 6 (we have documented at least 700) that are given over to student accommodation, it would seem that addressing the need for student housing

should be a higher priority than creating high density development along Clair Road for commuters from Toronto.

The proposed re-development of the Holiday Inn on Scottsdale (on university-owned land) is the best example perhaps of where the City's #1 focus should be. More of this type of accommodation fast-tracked to house students would free up a lot of ground-level housing for families and remove the urgency to divide and develop Rolling Hills.

The University of Guelph is a large employer, an economic driver, but they have abdicated their responsibility on the housing front. They have the land, they have the expertise to partner with the private sector, so in a housing crunch, why is the City not addressing this and working with U of G to provide housing for its own students? It is a lack of foresight, a lack of political will, and a lack of action that brings us to the point where destroying a beautiful area with abundant green space is preferable to providing purpose-built housing in compatible locations for 20 000 U of G students, most of whom live in Guelph for 8 months of the year.

We ask that you consider these points when making your future decisions. Please hit the pause button on Rolling Hills and focus more effort on working with the University, with developers, to build appropriate student housing which would then liberate a tremendous amount of family housing for residents who want to live here and contribute to the City.

Regards

McElderry Community

mcelderrycommunity@gmail.com