

Gow's Bridge



Linking the Old University Neighbourhood to the City of Guelph since 1897

Old University Neighbourhood Residents' Association Inc.

28 February 2023

Re: Committee of Adjustment File – 26 Forest St.

Members of the Committee of Adjustment

Your Committee might recall that when the application for 26 Forest St. came to your Committee last March, the Old University Neighbourhood Residents Association (OUNRA) submitted a letter to respond to this application. At that time the request for a severance under the required 15 m frontage was approved. We would now like to comment further on this new request that will allow three lots where there is currently one on that property.

Many of the points that we made in the previous letter still stand.

1. We are concerned about protecting the tree canopy in our neighbourhood and believe that several mature trees, that we believe are boundary trees, will have to be removed or will be fatally damaged in the construction on a lot of that width.
2. While the previous application asked for a variance to allow a 13 m frontage, we now have an application that will mean that there is even less – 11.9 m frontage. Again, we wonder on what criteria the Committee will make a determination – or indeed if there is any criteria. In other words, how low is the Committee prepared to go. We contend that a 21% reduction of the frontage is not a minor variance.
3. Our final concern, raised by the applicant through their agent Jeff Buisman, concerns soil contamination caused by an underground oil tank. This is a serious concern for neighbours that we have spoken to. If it is indeed serious enough to require the existing house to be torn down and a new application to be submitted, surely an environmental assessment needs to be completed and remediation undertaken before a severance is granted. Hopefully any contamination is contained and is local. But the neighbours have the right to know if their adjoining properties have been in any way affected.

At your last hearing on this property, it was claimed by the applicant that neighbourhood response was simply a NIMBYism. Further, the Committee seemed to pay little regard whatsoever to the concerns of the neighbourhood and neighbours. We believe that neighbours have a right to be heard and their concerns taken seriously. At the very least, we contend that remediation of the site occur before any severance is finalized.

Your sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Lawson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Lawson
Pres. OUNRA