

Email sent to Tim Moerman (City of Ottawa) re: city's R4 Zoning Review Discussion Paper.  
Dated January 2, 2017

On behalf of the Old Ottawa East Community Association I would like to provide you with comments on the City's R4 Zoning Review Discussion Paper.

I would first like to thank you for attending our planning committee meeting on November 22 where we had a wide ranging discussion about the elements of this paper as well as some of the other outstanding concerns of particular interest to our community.

I will start with some general comments on the R4 review, then stray briefly into some other areas of concern that have been raised during our discussions that are linked (although perhaps only indirectly) to the R4 review, and then conclude by providing feedback on some of the specific elements in the proposals for possible solutions.

## **General comments**

### ***Compatibility***

The paper references the current Official Plan policy directions for infill, intensification and compatibility within established communities and indicates that "the goal is to ensure that new low-rise multiple-unit buildings in these established communities respect and fit with their urban context, while still providing the opportunity for a gradual and appropriate increase in density and affordable housing choices in established inner-urban neighbourhoods".

Many residents of OOE remain concerned that the goal for compatibility, fit and gradual increase in density are not being met by recent zoning revisions, and that the current proposals for the R4 zone will not promote these goals either. The criteria developed to date in other zoning amendments have not satisfied community concerns; more consideration is needed in terms of implementation of goals on which we agree.

### ***Zoning definitions***

The paper identifies a number of the key concerns that have been expressed by residents of R4 (and in some situations R3) areas, most notably oversized dwelling units (apartments with very high bedroom counts) and the issue of rooming houses (where arrangements are between individual tenants and the landlord) versus dwelling units (where the arrangement is typically between a single housekeeping unit who participate jointly in the control and management of the household).

Our community would welcome clearer definitions within the zoning bylaws of the City (and consistent across all areas of City enforcement), and particularly would like to ensure that there is a proper regulation of developments which have been functioning like rooming houses but have been regulated as dwelling units.

## **Other concerns identified**

### ***Adherence to existing zoning rules***

Another general concern of our community, that is not specifically addressed in this paper, is the need for the City to support developments that adhere to the zoning bylaws. In particular, we believe that the City's planning staff should not be supporting projects (or indicating no concerns as feedback on Committee of Adjustment minor variance applications) that go beyond the scale allowed, e.g., where lot sizes restrict allowed housing to no more than a duplex, the city should not be supporting triplexes (which in some cases are of a scale more akin to a 4 storey building that is more in scale with allowed development in an R4 zone).

### ***Parking***

Parking is also an issue in OOE, particularly in the OOE neighbourhood north of the Queensway. This is an area where lack of parking has been exacerbated by the parking of contractors and now by the more limited parking available as a result of winter conditions. Further planned developments, which do not need to contain any on-site parking, are a major worry for many of the residents.

We respectfully request that City staff monitor the impacts of the parking changes implemented and report back to City officials on these impacts.

We further suggest that there is a link between the City's elimination of the need for parking for buildings with less than 12 units and the issue of garbage management. This parking change has in many cases eliminated an access to the rear yard that is sufficiently wide to allow for proper garbage storage in the rear or side yards.

### **Comments on specific proposals**

#### ***Limit on bedrooms***

While a limit on bedrooms in dwelling units is offered as a possible solution in the paper, you outlined numerous difficulties with such an approach in our November 22 discussion, e.g., by suggesting that developers could simply call rooms computer rooms or music rooms or offices and then subsequently have them used as bedrooms.

Personally, I was very discouraged by this interpretation, as I believe would many of the residents of Sandy Hill who were present at the June 28 Town and Gown meeting, when this idea was first raised. Therefore, I would respectfully suggest that this idea be further considered. Indeed, a linkage of bedroom count to other provisions such as toilets and showers and interior common space could prove effective, even though such an approach is beyond the typical scope of zoning.

It is not acceptable that rooms called offices, computer rooms or music rooms that are equipped with a closet and have a window are not seen for what they really are, i.e., bedrooms.

#### ***Garbage storage***

As per the earlier discussion (under parking), we support the City proposal "that indoor garbage storage of a certain size must be provided in any duplex, triplex or low-rise apartment dwelling".

#### ***Site Plan Control***

We support the idea of having Site Plan Control based on the scale of the building, and not merely the number of units.

#### ***Air-conditioning units***

The location of air-conditioning units is noted as a possible issue in some cases but no solution is proposed in the City paper.

We strongly believe that rules are needed re how many and where air conditioning units can be placed with respect to neighbouring properties. It is unacceptable to have 4 air-conditioning units on each side of a single family house just 2' from the property line (an actual situation in an R3 neighbourhood in our community). In an R4 zone, there is a potential for even more air-conditioning units to be located just 2' from neighbouring properties. These situations need to be regulated.

Finally, I would like to note that these comments have not dealt with all aspects of the discussion paper, but have been focused on issues of most concern to OOE. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

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