DRAFT

Hunt Club Community Association

Affordable Housing Committee

**St. Mary’s – Record of Discussion**

**July 30, 2024 - 10:00-10:45 am**

**Participants**

*City of Ottawa:*  Councillor Riley Brockington, Andrew Sutton, Lily Xu (Manager, Development Review South) Kelby Lodoen-Unseth (Planner)

*Taggart Realty Management:*  Kyle Kazda (Manager, Development)

*Ottawa Field Naturalists’ Club:*  Jakob Mueller (President), Owen Clarkin

*Hunt Club Community Association:*  Audrey Bélanger (President), Andrei Grushman

**Introduction**

At the request of the Hunt Club Community Association, Councillor Brockington convened a Teams meeting with all parties interested in the St. Mary’s subdivision project and the proposed pathway through Riverwood Park.

**1. “Missing Middle” Scenarios**

Audrey Bélanger stated the HCCA’s case for more density in the low-rise section of the St. Mary’s site. In light of the housing crisis, the HCCA welcomes the planned high-rise towers but opposes the proposed R3 zoning for the low-rise section of the site.

Kyle Kazda acknowledged the concern about “downzoning”.  He stated that having singles and townhouses along the west side respected the heritage value of the river and permitted a gradual transition to the high rises.  He also noted that there may be some geotechnical issues at the edge of the slope which would prevent taller buildings.

At the same time, Mr. Kazda agreed that the area between the edge of the slope and the high-rises could support more dense housing types which would produce a better transition from high to low density.  He also indicated that Taggart could consider alternatives to the large singles near the river – such as 3-4 storey condos or freehold townhouses.

**Next Steps**

* Mr. Kazda indicated that Taggart will consider amending its application for R3 zoning and maintaining a GM zoning for the site.
	+ Mr. Kazda retracted the statement with a precision that GM zoning could be maintained on more of the site with additional uses added, and not the whole site, effectively excluding the space currently dedicated to 17 singles by the river.
	+ Additional zoning discussions are planned as the HCCA opposes downzoning the area by the river to the lowest level of housing density.
* This zoning application will likely proceed to the City’s Planning and Housing Committee in late 2024.
* The current plan is to start construction in November 2025, beginning with the low-rise section. It would take about 16 months from the start of construction to have the site serviced and ready for homes to be built.

**2. Tree Conservation**

Jakob Mueller presented the concerns expressed by the Ottawa Field Naturalists’ Club and the HCCA regarding the impact of the proposed pathway on significant trees. He noted that Riverwood Park contains some very impressive trees, including the second largest Yellow Birch in Ottawa and possibly the largest Peachleaf Willow in the world.

Mr. Kazda noted the evidence that some trees had been misidentified and undertook to look into the consultant’s report submitted by the HCCA. This report confirmed the identification of the Yellow Birch and Peachleaf Willow, found that the large Butternut at the edge of the slope is a Category 2 (“retainable”), and assessed a smaller Butternut near the stormwater pond as a Category 1 (“non-retainable”).

Mr. Kazda indicated that the “work impact zone” near the Peachleaf Willow is 50m wide in order to support the construction of a large switchback which is required to meet the City’s accessibility guidelines. Other portions of the pathway and sewer route require a work zone which is only about 20m wide.

In order to protect the Peachleaf Willow’s “critical root zone”, which extends some 25m into the current work area, the HCCA proposed a fresh look at the “alternate route” which had been considered by the developer. This route would run along the bottom of the slope towards the new subdivision. It would cross a relatively gentle slope and connect with the proposed MUP around the middle of the “large singles” (#10).

This alternate route would avoid the need to build a large switchback for the multi-use pathway. The stormwater sewer could either follow the current route across the drainage channel or run alongside the watermain under the existing path to the river.

The HCCA noted that, given the new information about the significant trees affected by the work area, the alternate route would likely have a less harmful environmental impact than the proposed route. Although the old Yellow Birch is currently in the path of the alternate route, there is sufficient space to “weave” the pathway around it.

Councillor Brockington asked whether there would be sufficient flexibility to make adjustments to the design of the MUP once the draft Plan of Subdivision is approved by City staff. Lily Xu confirmed that it would be possible to insert language in the draft Plan which would encourage Taggart to consult with the community on the detailed design of the MUP. Mr. Kazda expressed support for this approach.

**Next Steps**

* Taggart will review the HCCA consultant’s report and will provide any comments to Audrey Bélanger.
* The HCCA will highlight the significant trees in Riverwood Park when Mayor Sutcliffe attends its Fall Festival in early September.
* The draft Plan of Subdivision will likely be ready for approval in October 2024. The HCCA would appreciate a copy of the Plan in due course.
* During the detailed design stage, Taggart will consult with the HCCA on possible adjustments to the route of the pathway and sewer.
* The OFNC will provide input on the selection of suitable trees and shrubs for the landscape plan, and Taggart will consult with the community on changes to the plan.

**3. Links to Active Transportation Network**

The HCCA expressed support for efforts to link the existing pathway in Riverwood Park to the proposed cycle track on Riverside Drive. Such a link to the City’s active transportation network would benefit residents of the new subdivision as well as residents of the Quinterra neighbourhood and the Rivergate towers.

**Next Steps**

* Kelby Lodoen-Unseth will connect Andrei Grushman with a member of the City’s Active Transportation team who is engaged with this issue. The HCCA would appreciate a copy of the City’s feasibility study.

**Conclusion**

Councillor Brockington thanked all participants for a constructive discussion. He commended the HCCA for its support of “smart” growth which balances more housing with suitable infrastructure and amenities.