

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

6. Properties located at 232 – 240 Oakland Avenue (Z-8578)
 - Carol Wiebe, MHBC Planning, on behalf of the applicant - expressing support for the staff recommendations; reaffirming that, as staff has pointed out, this is a Zoning By-law amendment only; indicating that the proposal that is before the Planning and Environment Committee conforms to the Official Plan; pointing out that, not only does it conform to the Official Plan, but in terms of the key parameters that are factors in determining whether a property is overbuilt, landscaped open space and the coverages as Mr. Lalande, Planner II, indicated; indicating that the amount of landscaped open space that is still being provided on this property is fifty percent more than what the by-law would require and the building lot coverage is half of what would be permitted so there will still be ample landscaped open space on the property for the enjoyment of the residents; pointing out that they did a host a neighbourhood meeting on March 22, 2016 and they invited all of the property owners surrounding the property and they also invited the tenants because, quite often, if you are in a rental you are not notified; advising that they had a good turnout of residents and property owners from the neighbourhood; reiterating that, as staff have pointed out, there were some concerns that were noted; with regards to the comments from the people who are currently living here, not surprisingly some of them said that they were disappointed to see that this ample green area and landscaped area was going to be diminished and they wanted to make sure that the buildings were sited in a way that a number of the mature trees could be retained; advising that, around the perimeter of this site, there are quite a number of very large, mature trees that are quite substantial; relating to the perimeter trees, every effort is going to be made to retain those and there are a couple of really beautiful specimen trees in the middle of the site as well and those are going to be targeted for specific tree saving; reiterating that every effort is going to be made to retain that nice landscaped character that the residents that are living there enjoy; advising that one of the other concerns that was identified was cars going at higher speeds through the site; indicating that, since then Bluestone has installed speed bumps on the property; noting that when they were made aware of that, they responded immediately and have put speed bumps through the driveway to try to curtail that and they have also ordered some stop signs; indicating that they are doing everything they can in a proactive way to try and deal with some of the issues that were raised by the residents that are currently living there; advising that they were just made aware, this morning, of a petition that was sent to the City and, in the petition, they identified four concerns and she would like to add to some of the comments that staff have made; relating to the lack of open space, as she has previously indicated, forty-five percent of this property will be still provided as landscaped open space and, at the end of Oakland Avenue, immediately adjacent to this property is a City park that has playground equipment in it so the children can easily get from this property to the City park without having to cross any public roads; indicating that she asked Bluestone if they could provide the Committee with some idea of the number of families that are currently living in this property and how many children are actually residing there; advising that nine percent of the rental units have children and on their latest estimate, there are sixteen children living on this property; advising that they expect, with the introduction of townhouses, that would certainly be more attractive to young families but there is certainly ample landscaped open space and a City park right close by so there will be a lot of opportunity for park and play area; indicating that, with regards to the vacancy rate, there was some concern expressed about additional rental units and this is going to result in higher vacancy rates and concerns about loss of property value; advising that there are no vacancies currently in any of the apartment buildings and when she was speaking with a number of the residents at the community meeting, several of them said that they are on a wait list to get into this development; pointing out that the reasons for that are really three-fold; it is very well maintained property, the rents are very reasonable and it is in a great location and there is easy access to transit; indicating that, for those three reasons, there is always a strong demand for people that want to locate in here; indicating that Bluestone is not going to build all of these buildings all at once, they

are going to be phased and it will all be dependent on the market take up so they are not going to overbuild and have a lot of vacancy rates which does not make a good business model and they want to make sure that they can sustain a healthy occupancy; relating to the traffic, as she has already indicated, Bluestone has taken immediate action to address the comments with regard to traffic through the site and again, it is just going to be vigilant to make sure that traffic going up and down Oakland Avenue slows, posting signs, having people slow down as they are coming in and out of the site; reiterating that Bluestone is committed to doing everything that they can to address that; relating to the building height, as Mr. Lalande, Planner II, indicated, the proposed height is in keeping with the Official Plan policies and it is appropriate for this site and it is also noted that the proposed four storey building is in the interior of the site and they have purposely identified that the two storey townhouses would be along the perimeter of the site so that it would be more respectful of the building heights in the surrounding neighbourhood; advising that they have done their best to try to provide an infill project that is sensitive to the surrounding neighbourhood but also provides much needed rental housing to this part of the City; reiterating that it still maintains a very ample amount of open space; relating to the parking, Bluestone has monitored the use of parking on this property for a number years and, on any given day, only about one third of parking stalls are actually being used so that rather than continue to park at a rate that is not warranted on this site, they have asked for a reduction that works out to about 1.12 parking spaces per unit which is much more representative of the actual usage and, again, that in turn allows for more of that property to be left for open space; reiterating their support of the staff recommendations; (*Note: Deputy Mayor Hubert enquires about the access onto Highbury Avenue, in terms of releasing congestion, was there any consideration given to a rights-in, rights-out; noting that he is not supportive of a left turn out onto Highbury Avenue*); indicating that the site plan that they submitted was proposing strictly a right-in, right-out; however, the challenge that they have heard back from Transportation staff, is that, in order to really effectively ensure that it is a right-in, right-out, you have to put in a centre median because then that prevents the lefts-in and lefts-out; pointing out that the problem with doing a centre median on Highbury Avenue is that there are driveways on the other side so that would not work; pointing out that staff are not particularly enamoured with a pork chop idea but that is certainly another option that they would like to explore through the site plan process; advising that she thinks she knows what the answer to that will be; pointing out that the main reason for proposing a vehicular access of some type out onto Highbury Avenue was to try and minimize all of that traffic using Oakland Avenue; indicating that they really wanted to be cognizant of the additional units and the potential for additional traffic; reiterating that the purpose was to try to divert part of that traffic away from Oakland Avenue; *M. Elmadhoon, Traffic Planning Engineer, responds that a restricted access here will not function the way it should intend to; when Transportation looks at an access, whether it is needed or not, we look at the development will generate that much traffic volume that will need more access and whether that access will be safe or not; in this case, through Oakland Avenue, access to the area from Highbury Avenue, can be either from Brydges Street, which has some left-turn lanes so it is better that they encourage the northbound traffic to go through there rather than to go through Oakland Avenue than through an access that does not have any left-turn lanes or anything because we have very limited right-of-way at that section and, if it works as a restricted access, that would be fine, but he does not see a way that that can be achieved.*); (*Note: Councillor Helmer enquires about a number of the concerns raised by the public are site plan related concerns and there seems to be at least one area where there seems to be some disagreement between the applicant and our staff around the site plan in terms of traffic access. In many cases, when we do intensification and infill projects, we have an h-5 for a public site plan meeting to sort out the site plan issues and have public input on that; enquiring as to why do we not have an h-5 holding provision on what is before the Committee for the zoning amendment.*); *E. Lalande, Planner II, responds that the H-5 was not included for a couple of reasons, one of those reasons being that it was not requested; however, the more important reason was that through a review of what they have proposed on the concept, there are sufficient components that are supportable and there is a lot of merit to the application besides the access issue which is largely going to be determined through Transportation; it was seen that that issue could be resolved internally*

through the site plan process normally and that a public site plan for the access was not warranted.

- Brian Tweedie, 1278 Wilton Avenue – indicating that, in his discussions with his neighbours, a lot of concerns have been raised, including privacy, property value and the sewer system; noting that they have a problem with the sewer system as it stands now with the volume that comes out of the building area; advising that they want to double the size, which is a big concern for both Oakland Avenue and Wilton Avenue as the sewer backs up onto Oakland Avenue and then it backs up onto Wilton Avenue; the loss of mature trees in the area and the potential for increased crime in that area; pointing out that the problem that stands right now is that Bluestone has done a make-up job cosmetically on the outside of the buildings and the parking area, cleaned up the area; understanding that there are problems within the buildings such as electrical problems, sewage problems and plumbing; thinking that those problems should be addressed before they even attempt to build more buildings to satisfy the tenants that are there now; indicating that, in the purchasing of these properties, there was quite a few trees in one of the corners of this area that were purchased from people who live on the street, on Wilton Avenue; believing that there was probably at least fifty trees in that area and over half of those have been taken down already; advising that there has been some deception on the part of Bluestone while purchasing the properties; pointing out that they had told the residents of Wilton Avenue, who they wanted to purchase the buildings from, that they wanted to construct more parking for the building for the tenants in that area; noting that a few people had sold at that point and the last few places that were purchased, they told them that they may put another three storey building up; indicating that this is a lot more than what they told people when they were purchasing so there has been some deception on the side of Bluestone in the purchase of those properties which is a big concern at this point; relating to crime, there is a lot of police activity in that area, especially in the evenings, at night; advising that he has personally been sitting in his backyard and somebody ran through from the building, through his backyard with the police chasing them while his kids were playing in the backyard; advising that he lives on Wilton Avenue and his property and a few of the others are used quite often for a short-cut to get from the building to Wilton Avenue; instead of walking up to Oakland Avenue, they come through the backyard, jump the fence and come through late in the evening; advising that when he first moved into the area he had kids that were attending school and there was a bus route coming down Wilton Avenue to Oakland Avenue and up Oakland Avenue to Brydges Street; indicating that, at the Oakland Avenue and Wilton Avenue area there is a stop sign for the Oakland Avenue drivers; indicating that he has seen numerous accidents at that corner due to people coming up that street and not stopping for the stop sign; thinking that Wilton Avenue is a quiet street, but, at certain times Wilton Avenue is used for a raceway from Highbury Avenue to Florence Street and the cars that go by there are racing to beat the lights at Highbury Avenue and Florence Street; indicating that it is very dangerous at that time and late in the evening, with cars coming down the street are sideswiped by cars coming up the street thinking that the stop sign means nothing because they do not need to stop for it for whatever reason; noting that there have been multiple accidents at that location; advising that, in the past, he had asked for a four way stop at that location to alleviate that, which never happened; noting that he is not sure why the four way stop was not put in; further noting that accidents still happen there to this day at that location; relating to the entranceway to Highbury Avenue where they are asking for an exit, that is currently a walkway for people coming out of the building to get to Highbury Avenue or to get to the bus; advising that it is not all that wide; speaking to one of the residents adjacent to that walkway and they are concerned that there is not enough room for pedestrians and traffic to go up Highbury Avenue; pointing out that that was a driveway in the past, as an exit, and it was closed down due to the amount of problems that it created on Highbury Avenue; indicating that Highbury Avenue has not slowed down and traffic has increased exponentially; pointing out that he cannot see anyone trying to exit out of there onto Highbury Avenue; noting that people have a hard time getting out of their driveways; pointing out that there are a lot of people here today from this area and he is sure that they have a lot to say about this; referring to the park that was previously mentioned, he noticed that, in the winter time, the snow removal from the building was dumped into the park; reiterating that all the snow that was taken away from the building

was dumped into a park area for the kids that need it to play; relating to the number of kids in the area, the did not have any concern for people with pets or dogs that use this park too; advising that there are a lot of people with pets that use the park, not just kids; believing that there are a lot more kids in the area than what they presented; indicating that he was unable to attend public meeting because he had to work and there may have been other people who were unable to attend the meeting for the same reason; and, pointing out that, in the presentation map, the back of the building will be six feet from the fence line and those townhouses are probably going to have a deck back there and people are going to be sitting on their deck probably two feet from the fence line staring into people's backyards on Oakland Avenue.

- Sheila Carter, 226 Oakland Avenue - indicating that they do not want the townhouses behind them as it will lower their house prices when they go to sell; advising that she has lived on Oakland Avenue for 50 years and now they want to put all of these townhouses in; indicating that the traffic is bad enough now; pointing out that it was mentioned that there will be two hundred plus more parking spots put on the site; wondering where all of the traffic is going to go; pointing out that the sewer, the end house on Oakland Avenue, the one day the lady called her and told her not to flush the toilet and do not wash as she has turds coming up in her basement; wondering where all of this other water is going to go, are they going to have more sewer problems now; pointing out that the amount of land that is between their backyard from 230 Oakland Avenue to Wilton Avenue, they are going to have townhouses in there; wondering what they are going to face when they get up in the morning and look out their dining room window; indicating that they do not want that, that they can put it somewhere else on the property; pointing out that there are a number of car accidents on the corner of Oakland Avenue and Wilton Avenue; noting that in one accident, the car went up onto the lawn; indicating that there are lots of police going to the Oakland apartments and there is a lot of stuff going on there that you do not know about; and, asking that the Committee help them out.
- Dale Snively, 224 Oakland Avenue – indicating that he has lived here 63 years, his entire life; advising that, as a child he used to play on this property as it was an open field and they had a lot of fun there; pointing out that, as an adult, certain things concern him about this whole unit; noting that some of them have been touched on by Bluestone, some of them have been touched on by the neighbours; advising that the proposal will double the number of units that are in there and this will approximately double the amount of traffic and the number of people in the neighbourhood; pointing out that when he looks out his window now he is approximately sixty-five feet to the property line and after this proposal is approved, he will be looking at a two and a half storey townhouse; noting that two and a half storeys is approximately the ceiling height in the Council Chambers, sixty feet away; indicating that they are looking at increased traffic flow regardless of how many people live in the apartments; noting that there are delivery vehicles, service vehicles, emergency vehicles; advising that this is a dead-end street, only one way in, one way out; recommending to forget about Highbury Avenue as it was already tried and was cancelled for whatever reason; as a property owner, someone who has grown up in this neighbourhood, someone who is thinking about the City as a whole, we are talking about a reduction of the green space; noting that it does not affect him as he has his own green space but what about the tenants, where are the supposed to go and relax; advising that there will be an increase in the hard surface also referred to as parking lots, the rain runoff, the snow melt, currently it goes into the sewer system; enquiring if this is going to increase; guessing, as a layman, yes, salt, water, oil, gasoline, whatever gets spilled on the parking lot, that ends up in the sewer and puts a bit of a burden on the sewage system and the environment; advising that the increase in the sewer capacity is all well and good, statistics always prove one thing, they are not always right; enquiring whether or not this is going to lead to flooding for the houses in the neighbourhood; advising that it is a quiet residential area now; enquiring if it is going to stay quiet; pointing out that he asked the Bluestone representative at the public meeting what the demographic that they are trying to bring into the neighbourhood; advising that he did not receive an answer on that; as a neighbour and a member of the neighbourhood, he hopes that it does not turn into a Bouleee Street, Kipps Lane, etc.; enquiring about the property values for those people who have homes abutting this property; wondering what this will do to the property values; doubting that it will go up; indicating that this will change the personality of the

neighbourhood, it is going to go from a quiet residential, reasonably nice neighbourhood to something that is more get up and go; and, advising that the traffic on the road is bad enough now, we do not need an increase.

- Dana Barstys, 531 Highbury Avenue North – indicating that she lives right beside the walkway and has owned the property since 2002; advising that there is a lot of people cutting through her property; expressing surprise that the bus stop right in front of her property was not mentioned; wondering how that affects the road as she has to slow down and watch for pedestrians just to get into her driveway so that they are safe as they are often right on her driveway waiting for the bus; expressing concern about neighbourhood flooding and Bluestone possibly not maintaining their own property and thinking of going on and building more; advising that she has a very personal issue, as she has been in the real estate business on a small scale for fourteen years; indicating that she is living in her last house and to get out of the red she is going to be selling her house and now there is a rezoning; indicating that she is going to have an apartment building right behind her fence staring right into her backyard; advising that that is a major concern for her; expressing concern if they do end up installing a road right beside Highbury Avenue along with major safety issues, which is another property value loss; noting that she is going to be putting a sign up soon and there will be enquiries about the rezoning; and, wondering how she is going to sell her property after being in this business for fourteen years on her own, raising five kids on her own.
- Lou Skinner, 230 Oakland Avenue – expressing concern that, at the meeting in March, 2016, they were informed that there were going to be five two-storey apartments; seeing on the presentation that they have five three-and-a-half storeys and only two two-storey apartments; indicating that they were misinformed about that; referencing the park that is available for all the kids, that park is only one and a half acres which is not very much for that many tenants; pointing out that the proposed apartments that are going in are twenty-four feet from his backyard; noting that he has lived there for twenty-eight years; indicating that that will leave an apartment building to the east of him and to the north of him; being on a corner lot he will be surrounded with apartment buildings and traffic; and, enquiring about what he is going to do with his place when he is ready to sell it as it is not going to be worth carrying out of there.