

Parker, Charles

From: MaryAnn Nolan
Sent: Friday, November 23, 2012 8:43 AM
To: Branscombe, Nancy
Cc: Parker, Charles
Subject: "BIGS" Study and Mondays meeting Nov. 26th

Dear Councilwoman Branscomb and Sr. Planner Parker;

We are part of the concerned residents in this study area. We live at the juxtaposition of Cedar Avenue and Wharncliffe Road North. We are also in full view of the Thames River and Gibbons Park. Due to the fact of my mobility issues I get to spend time, either on our deck or from any part of the back of our home observing the river, park and the life surrounding all this lush land.

There are so very many people who use this land, not to mention the creatures who dwell in, on and around it. I am dismayed that the city would support in most ways, development on the scale contained in the study.

Our own home, after we purchased it from Louis Flanagan in 2002, was due for some refurbishment and update, as it dates from 1949. During this process of our planning we found a study done in conjunction with the city planners for this property (noted as Waldorf Park) and in several references, the study spoke to the quality of the soil, which is a sand base, the proximity of the river and erosion factors.

We were not allowed to build a small addition at the back of the house (to enlarge the kitchen) but instead got approval to add on the side of the house. During all this process which took 4 years, the river bank continued to erode, and eventually we got a window of opportunity for the city to come and bolster and remake the bank. Our property was the only clear access for the equipment to use in this job and the back garden was destroyed, as well as losing 5 trees. The men involved were great and were considerate, for which we were very appreciative. And we thank all of you for that. However it was apparent that further building would be of severe damage to the river bank, that we have the smallest of properties on this length of Cedar Avenue. Also there was a trade of properties to the city and one back to us, the side yard. 33 plus feet was deeded back to us, whilst an additional 33 feet on the other side of our fence line, rented by Tom and Pat Moulton, was left as city property. It seems in the maps accompanying the "Urban Village Plan," esp, the trails portion and walkway portion, this is not correct.

Also if a walkway were to be imposed on the land lining the river, what would you do to the homes? Do you intend to buy them?

Only last week we received an updated valuation from the Ont. Municipal Office that listed a huge rise in our homes value...I wonder where the money to pay for these residential properties will come from, since our current property taxes are so high? and the city fights I think, to keep them at some what similar levels... Is this concept realistic or is it a developers dream? We have a stable neighbourhood here, quiet, with a good mix of owners, some of whom have the deed for 3 plex buildings, some are absentee or were absentee landlords including our property. When Mr. Flanagan owned it but no longer. We've many long term residents who've lived here 20 to forty years, we have no Fleming Drive student problems and no furniture or garbage littering the streets or drunken brawls disturbing the peace.

We do however have, a plethora of wildlife, yes, deers, but also red fox, coyotes, beaver, river otters, turtles, including the rare/ endangered species of turtles, the spiny soft shell and the snapping turtle.

We have counted from our yard and home over 56 species of birds, additional butterflies, humming birds, owls, eagles, sea and bald eagles, and this past winter a snowy owl too. We have little auto traffic, much of it local or people who get lost on Cedar Avenue.

It is hard to see how 'intensification' will add to anyones life...but perhaps it is the lining of pockets that is the real prize?

We both believe this development will NOT bring anything to this neighbourhood except congestion, high rent rates for anyone who is looking at high rise or townhouse accommodations.

The few small stores beyond Oxford and Wharncliffe Rd. North have existed because they are conveniently local, or close to the dormitories of the University. Many of the new apartment/townhome rentals built by private companies, are not at 100% tenancy and the University itself is building more student places, at Brescia and also near Althouse College. Some of the Apartments along Wharncliffe North are not rented out either, so are any more really needed? I feel it will create a student ghetto.

If the city is seriously thinking of spending this kind of money over however long it takes, why are we not investing in low cost housing for seniors, small and beginning families instead?

Why disturb the wonderful lands at the Thames River for developers dollars? Oh yes, Senior or low cost housing doesn't make the kind of profit this plan implies, does it?

Isn't this incredible setting, easily accessible from Gibbons Park a wonder to enjoy? And currently open to all. and it is used, weddings, memorial services, frisbee games, childrens play, dog walking, kayaking down the river or canoeing. skipping rocks with your son or grandson. Picnics, cricket games, all testify to the diversity of people who love and use this place and that doesn't include the track and field day activities nor the fishing classes, tai chi groups that meet and do their thing at the riverside....People come to this park area because it is what and how it is. who wants to go to a place where you find no care or thought? I fear this is what will occur here if this plan goes through....

None of this plan makes a great deal of sense, when we need housing but not of this type and cost, We need to leave the trees and wildlife alone to thrive and add to the richness of this city.

Why cut down lush trees to then replant 'clusters' that will take 15 years to look like trees and take away the shelter and homes they proved for our bird life?

We believe our neighbourhood will take a unified action on this plan and that you as representatives of the residents will come here and take a look at what there is and ask yourselves, 'Does this need this kind of change?'

Thank You,

Maryann and Brendan Nolan
396 Cedar Avenue
London, Ont. N6G1E7