

Dear Members of the Corporate Services Committee,

I am here today to ask for an amendment to the Public Notice Policy.

The amendment requires the civic administration to consult with area residents when considering a new municipal parking lot. **The wording of the proposed policy reflects the wording used by Chief By-law Enforcement Officer Orest Katolyk at the January 7, 2020 Civic Works Committee: (video que 1.05 min.)**

**Civic administration will inform and consult with area residents through a public participation meeting and site plan approval process on proposed new municipal parking lots.**

I want to explain what happened in my neighbourhood in 2019 when the city entered into a partnership with a private property owner who owned several properties along John St., St. George St. and Mill St. in North Talbot. It was the worst thing that has happened to this neighbourhood possibly ever and it doesn't appear the damage done will be reversed.

And we don't want that to happen to any other neighbourhood.

In 2019 the above-mentioned property owner entered into an agreement to co-manage a municipal parking lot with the City of London in the interior block bound by John St., St. George St. and Mill St. The boundaries of the parking lot encompassed other private property not part of the agreement and butted up against the private windows of tenants renting these properties from the private property owner.

Over one weekend the property owner bulldozed the backyards of these properties, stripped off all top soil and bulldozed trees. In the process, property of other landowners was damaged. This was done without any notice to adjacent property owners and possibly tenants who may have rented the property prior to the commencement of the school year with a backyard only to return to a property with no backyard. The bulldozing occurred in September 2019. Residents did not have time to ask whether tree permits were required or time to make inquiries. In a blink, backyards were gone and the block instantly became bare leaving all adjacent properties surrounded by a parking lot.

Frantic calls were made to by-law enforcement but the response was unconcerned and I now understand why. They were aware of the partnership with the city for a municipal parking lot and we weren't. In fact, I personally needed to file a Municipal Freedom of Information request to receive communications from staff to fully understand what took place as I could not receive a proper rationale for what had happened.

It was shocking and if this happened behind your house or neighbourhood, you would be outraged too.

Here is a quote from Dave Hallam who lives at 166 John St. and whose property was damaged.

"I am still very upset about the self-identified destruction of our fence at

66 St. George and the resulting erosion of our property onto the lowered grade surrounding it. I asked for remediation of a person identified as Mr. Sims property manager, but neither Mr. Sims nor the city, apparently partners in this affair, have seen fit to repair the damage caused.

I cannot understand why we have been treated so casually and poorly."

Mr. Hallam was quoted with consent.

George Kotsifas has stated that the civic administration has agreed to consult with area residents before they endorse a new municipal parking lot. While this may be true, a verbal commitment is not binding and does not inform other residents of this obligation. If the current staff were to leave so would this commitment, and the reason we are asking for the amendment. A verbal commitment is not accountable. I hope you can appreciate the fact that no one talked to us when we raised alarm. My feeling was that the civic administration believed it was none of our business because it was a private partnership.

To date the city has failed to reimburse property owners that experienced damage to fences, or even acknowledged that they made a mistake in approving a plan that was poorly researched and oblivious to tenants and people that live there.

Council failed to do their job when they glossed over the proposed parking lot and since there was no public notice, no one had an opportunity to raise the flaws in the mapping and intrusion into the privacy of tenants and other property owners or the loss of green space.

Eventually council reversed its approval of this parking lot but not until I filed the MFIPPA request and presented to committee on January 7, 2020. That was weeks after the damage occurred and is still occurring. The only difference today is that the property owner erected fences to keep eyes out of the interior block and uses the former backyards for excessive tenant parking.

Also, on January 7, 2020 of the Civic Works Committee, Mayor Ed Holder asked what could be done in the short term to alleviate some of the damage because it looked like a 'ghetto' (video que 1.16). By-law enforcement suggested a property standards blitz but other than fences being erected, there is no evidence that a property blitz took place, and I will walk through the attached photographs as to why that is.

When we asked that the city pay for the damage done to nearby properties from the bulldozing, the response from the civic administration was that it wasn't their responsibility but rather a civil matter between the property owners. But the property would not have been bulldozed without an agreement with the city so it is unbecoming of the city to dodge their contribution to the damages to property.

Currently, area residents are notified of private land seeking a land use change for a parking lot. We are asking that the same protocol be extended to municipal parking lots.

We are asking that this protocol be formally adopted through an amendment to the Public Notice Policy.

In closing I just want to say that I really dread coming down here and making these presentations. This event has caused so much frustration among the residents that were most impacted and it made ugly an entire city block where people live. All this could have been avoided if someone just talked to us. And to answer Dave's question about "why we were treated so casually and poorly", my answer (and opinion) is that the city doesn't see the people that live in North Talbot because there is a bias towards heavily tenanted neighbourhoods and invisible to the broader interest of commerce.

Asking:

- Amendment to the Public Notice Act
- Property owners be compensated by the City of London for damages incurred during construction of the parking lot;
- That grading and top soil be restored, and;
- Zoning green space requirements, separate from parking, be enforced and restored.

Photographs:

- 1-4 bulldozed area several weeks after occurrence
- 5 damaged fence at 66 St George St.
- 6 soil erosion at 66 St. George St
- 7 & 8 back of houses along St. George St
- 9 front of houses along St. George St
- 10 back of houses along John St
- 11 front of houses along John St.

These properties violate the zoning requirement in this neighbour of 24% softscaping not used for parking,

Thank You  
AnnaMaria Valastro





















## 10. Metered Municipal and Public Parking Lots

The private parking lot at 175-193 Mill Street, 52-64 St. George Street and 174-192 John Street has been added to the list of parking lots managed by the City for the property owner.

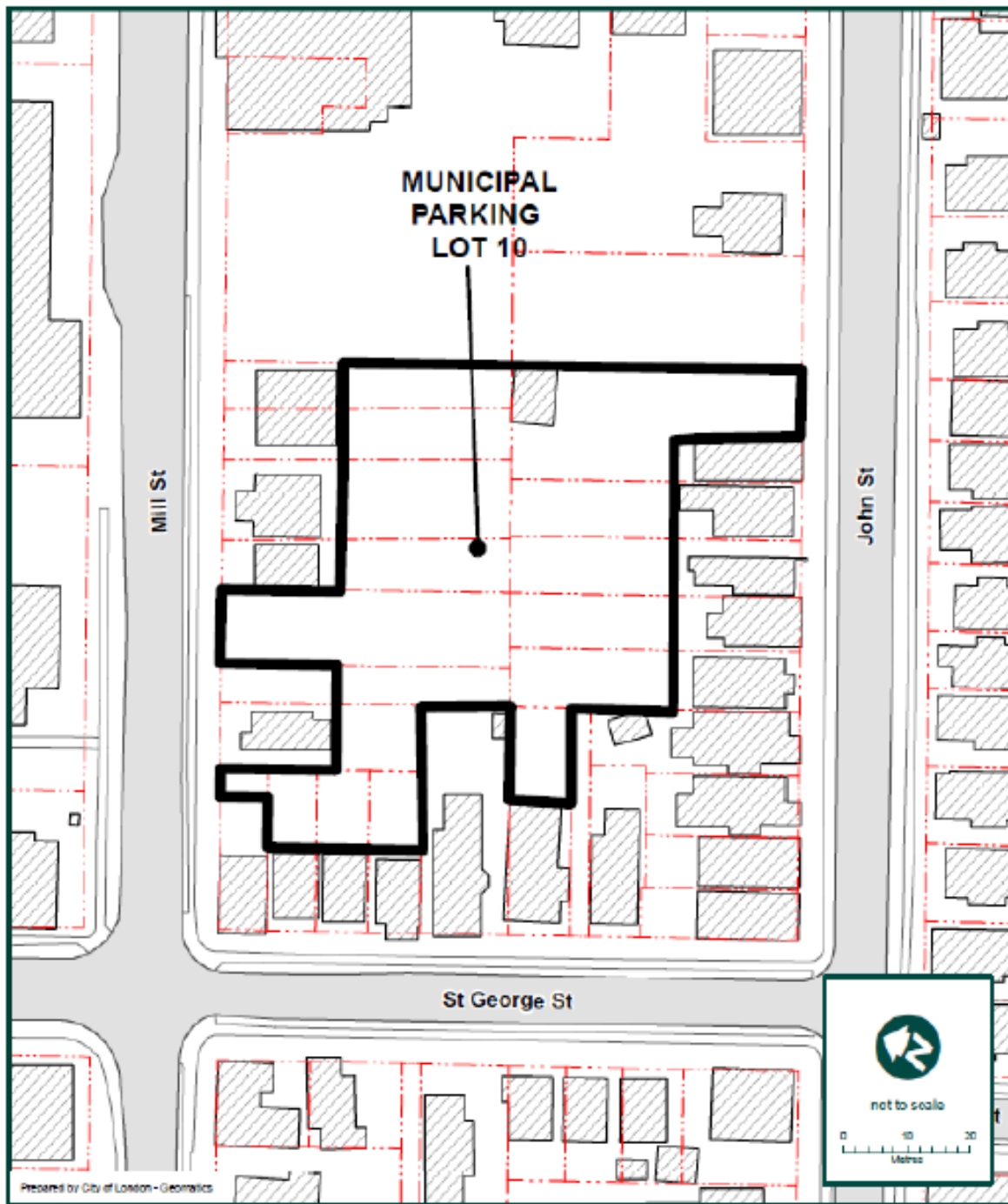


Figure 18: Municipal Lot 10

Amendments are required to Schedule 22 (Metered Off-street Municipal Parking Lots) and Schedule 30 (Metered Municipal and Public Parking Lots) to address the above change.