

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

3.1 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING – 192-196 Central Avenue, 193-197 Central Avenue and 200 Albert Street (TZ-9316)

- Councillor Squire: Staff report on this matter, please. Thank you very much. Any technical questions only, please, Committee? There being none we will go to presentations. Is the applicant making a presentation?
- Good Afternoon Mr. Chair, it's Scott Allen from MHBC Planning.
- Councillor Squire: Good afternoon.
- Scott Allen, MHBC Planning: Yes. I will make a very brief presentation on behalf of the applicant. With me today, I should mention, representing the applicant, Muky Pundaky, and he's available to answer any questions as well. At this time, we'd like to express our support for the findings and recommendation of the Development Services report as presented by Ms. Maton. In particular, we agree with the finding that the proposed extension of the temporary commercial parking permission to these properties would help address local parking demands in the near term and not undermine the long-term redevelopment potential of the lands. This finding also reflects commentary provided in our planning justification report which was submitted in support of this application. With that in mind, Mr. Chair, I'd like to thank the Committee for its consideration and will gladly answer any questions that members may have.
- Councillor Squire: Thank you very much. Any other delegations from the public? I shouldn't say delegations, speakers. Are there any?
- Catharine Saunders, City Clerk: Mr. Chair, we do have some members of the public who wish to speak.
- Councillor Squire: Okay.
- Catharine Saunders, City Clerk: The first would be Mr. Rajani.
- Heenal Rajani: Hello. Good afternoon.
- Councillor Squire: Good afternoon. You will have five minutes to speak sir so you can start right now.
- Heenal Rajani: Thank you very much Mr. Squire. First I am speaking. I am a downtown business owner and I live close to downtown and in the Piccadilly Street area with my family, four children and I understand the need for, for parking in downtown, I understand the need in a specific area and with regard to the Official Plan and the Talbot area and I just think how the by-law extension needs more consideration and I think the Committee members will have seen the representation from members of the public especially their concerns. I think there are more voices out there, more members of the public who maybe not writing letters and are communicating concerns in other ways, other forums and you know and I hear the representations and from staff and I see in this report it says that extending temporary use T-70 zone for additional three years will have no impact on the potential for long-term redevelopment at the site. You know, however, I think, at the same time there has been an extension, extension, extension on these temporary things with three years and three years for some of these sites for over twenty years and I think it's just not really a fair way of saying it's really temporary when we, when we recognize there is a need for development downtown, we recognize that these are underutilized sites and

what's in the report. These measures, you know, while they are outside the downtown parking strategy area, the gradual phasing out of surface commercial parking lots is recommended to avoid parking shortages while the Strategy comes to fruition. The short-term extension would continue to provide parking in the core so that area residents businesses which we absolutely need but this has to be short-term, you know, and I saw last year that, last April, because of Covid, there's conversations around having a new parking structure develop as part of understandably the financial uncertainty those conversations had to be shelved by the City and I think, you know, if we keep giving these three year extensions then that's not really encouraging those kinds of projects that we absolutely need, the development of better alternatives to parking, you know, and that is budgeted for, I know you have, there's a budget there for sustainable city that London is looking at infrastructure to built, maintained and operated to meeting the needs of the community and replacing surface parking with efficient, convenient and cost effective public parking, business person social activities in the downtown and I think you have got to think about that and so I'm I understand your, this Committee's unlikely to go against the recommendations of staff on this matter I just invite you to consider whether a three year extension is appropriate, whether it could be a shorter period of time, even slightly shorter, you know, just send the message that this is not a carte-blanche to keep getting these extensions and not doing anything to develop these sites while integrating parking into those developments and as well with parking as much as there is a need you don't have to consider this because this is not a new policy as such but to think about this Climate Emergency Evaluation tool and to think about what is the climate emergency you know, what's the climate impact of this and is there a better way of doing this and how can we be encouraging more other forms of transportation than cars and I think that has to be considered at the same time as when you are doing anything with parking.

- Councillor Squire: You have one minute remaining.
- Heenal Rajani: Thank you very much. Those are the things I invite the, this Committee to consider. I think there's, there's, I know you are probably unlikely to vote against this but to say could it be less than three years, how can we re-examine more parking matters coming up shortly in the next weeks, months, how can we encourage those difficult parking to be better, transportation. Thank you for your time. Appreciate the opportunity to share this with you today
- Councillor Squire: Thank you very much for coming to speak to us. Very much appreciated. Next speaker.
- Catharine Saunders: Mr. Chair, this would be Ms. McKeating.
- Councillor Squire: Yes.
- Hi there. Can people hear me?
- Councillor Squire: I can certainly hear you.
- Kelley McKeating: Oh dear, maybe I should talk quieter.
- Councillor Squire: No, no, it's okay. I have, you can start now and it will be five minutes.
- Okay. Thanks a lot. I am Kelley McKeating and I'm speaking today on behalf of the London Region branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario and like the prior speaker, I'm also, and we as an organization, are opposed to yet another round of renewal of these temporary parking zoning amendments. I

don't know how many parking spots there are in the downtown and adjacent to downtown area as compared to ten years ago, I can certainly think that in recent months there was a demolition at York and Talbot Streets if I recall correctly which expanded the parking, the surface parking lot availability downtown. There was also a demolition, a number of years ago at 199 Queens Avenue. I think that if there is another zoning amendment allowed here, there is absolutely no motivation for a property owner to ever develop the land or sell the land to somebody who does want to do an appropriate development. The denial of these in similar applications would certainly motivate the owner to either develop or sell and then the land would no longer be underutilized in the words of the Planner. The other thing that a denial of these applications would do is put less pressure on developers to demolish heritage property when they do want to develop, it would be really nice if more vacant land was available to them. I would also question whether these parking spots truly are needed. I work very close to a large parking lot at Piccadilly and St. George Street and pre-pandemic, my observation when I was walking out during the work day is that that parking lot is not close to being completely full and it's only three or four blocks away from these parking lots and that's all I have to say today. Thank you for listening.

- Councillor Squire: Thank you very much. We appreciate you coming to speak to us today. Any other speakers?
- Catharine Saunders, City Clerk: Mr. Chair, the last person on this item is Charlene Jones.
- Councillor Squire: Great.
- Charlene Jones: Hi. Thank you.
- Councillor Squire: Hi. You have five minutes to speak starting right now.
- Ok. Good afternoon. I'm the owner of Artistic Spa, I'm a downtown business and property owner. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak today. When I started my business thirty-three years ago, Richmond Row was full of beautiful boutiques, salons and restaurants, all thriving businesses. We didn't have these parking lots, only a pleasant shopping experience. Today it's a very different feel, it doesn't have the same vibe, it's not a good experience anymore, it's no longer thriving with people shopping, we now rely heavily on eight months when the students living in the area come to shop, eat and drink but they are walking or taking cabs, they're not usually driving. I wonder what this area would have been like today had we voted for residential development several years ago. I do know pre-Covid these parking lots were not all full utilized and now with people working from home we certainly won't need all three lots. Downtown needs people, we need people living downtown to support the businesses, especially now with the housing shortage in London, now's the time to encourage and help property owners with new development. I'm not sure what another three years of empty lots would look like for the future of downtown. Currently the lots are attracting drugs, crime and homelessness all which discourages people from wanting to come downtown. We need change, we need to create a whole wonderful shopping experience again. That's all I, that's my input.
- Councillor Squire: Thank you very much. It's very much appreciated. Thanks for speaking to us today. Any other speakers today? No.
- Catharine Saunders, City Clerk: Mr. Chair, we have no members of the public on the list or on the call.

- Councillor Squire: Great. Thank you very much. Could I get a motion to close the public participation meeting?