

Mayor and Council  
City of Victoria

October 22, 2017

Fort Street Development Proposal – 10% Affordability

Dear Mayor and Council

I object to the ‘resurrection’ of this dead horse. I read with amazement that after months of negotiations City Staff were able to come to an agreement with the developer that “no less that 10% of the agreed unit count, being no less that ten units, be provided as affordable rental units on another site within the City of Victoria.”

And further, “if the non-market units are not granted an occupancy permit by 2020, the applicant would provide \$25,000 per unit as a cash-in-lieu contribution to the City’s Housing Reserve Fund. This would be secured through a Housing Agreement registered on title.” I suppose that this is meant to be a penalty.

Wow. I’m impressed. Let’s see. At \$25,000 per unit for 10 units (lets be realistic, that is all we are going to get) that’s \$250,000.00 Another, somewhat less enthusiastic “Wow.” Really, that’s about half the price of one unit in this proposal. Oops. Did City Staff figure that one out?

We went from 10% by unit count to 0.50 % when calculated in dollars. The one big public amenity forced on the developer after lengthy negotiations is another gift to the developer. Oops.

That’s not even a fair tip in a lousy restaurant. In fact, most servers would be more than a little upset. I’m a taxpayer, and I’m upset. It looks like City Staff are being out-gunned at the negotiating table.

This is unacceptable. If you want to ensure that housing remains unaffordable, this is the way to go. At a minimum the percentage of less-than-market-value units should be on-site. The people who will live in this supported housing should not be isolated, hidden away in another part of town. At a minimum, the percentage of less-than-market-value units should be 35% of what is built. That is, if the City wants to lessen the crisis of affordable housing. The developer is asking for an incredible 96 units on this historic forested property. If 35 of these 96 units were affordable housing, then I would have no objection to this development proposal. (Wow!)

If you want to give the developer so much (by re-zoning this Urban Forest, amending the OCP and loading the property with variances), then it is important that the community receive a real amenity. A real amenity that will actually start to solve the very real problems we have. Anything less is simply kicking the can down the road.

I ask you to send this proposal back to the developer as unacceptable.

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