

Ros Dyers - FW: Request to Ec Dev

From: "Robert Eisenberg" <rdyers@toronto.ca>
To: <rdyers@toronto.ca>
Date: 9/2/2008 8:39 AM
Subject: FW: Request to Ec Dev
Attachments: Request to deliver deposition to Economic Development Committee.docx

Dear Ms Dyers: Thank you for your help - would you kindly acknowledge receipt of this request?

York Heritage Properties

Request to deliver deposition to Economic Development Committee, September 16, 2008

From property owners in Liberty Village.

Property owners included have restored, own and manage almost 2 million square feet of office buildings in Liberty Village as well as over thirteen million square feet of office buildings elsewhere in the GTA.

We wish to address the following issues:

The Local Road or Front Street Extension

Congestion along Liberty Street, ugly dead-end streets, decrepit buildings, properties in limbo for years, development opportunities lost to the suburbs, and an atmosphere of frustration and neglect threaten to reverse the influx of new companies and employment opportunities that have made Liberty Village a singular success story.

The local road presents a one time opportunity to provide an east-west corridor at the southern end of Liberty Village leading to the revitalization of the Village's dilapidated and decaying southern boundary, the vista seen by tens of thousands of motorists each day as they pass along the Gardiner Expressway. The road will create the potential for proper transit routes, paths for pedestrians and bicycles, and greatly improve safe traffic flow in and out of the area and a convenient alternative to approaching the neighbourhood via Springhurst, a residential street.

We have obtained estimates of the cost of constructing the local road and would like to discuss possible routing of the road.

If the land is not expropriated soon, the opportunity will be lost forever and the impact irreversible. The development freeze on the right-of-way can not be indefinitely maintained.

Zoning - Density and Use

Development in Liberty Village is governed by two by-laws, a CR zoning that allows three times coverage with yet-to-be resolved uses and an I3 zoning that allows seven times coverage with shifting interpretations at City Hall as to what ought to be allowed in an I3 zone.

Uncertainty is a developer's greatest enemy and very discouraging for businesses considering Liberty Village, whose suburban rental rates provide a viable alternative to 905 locations. Both density and use are up in the air. We do not know what we can build or whom we can accommodate. It is impossible to make a competitive proposal to a prospective company without knowing what one can deliver.

We request assistance from Economic Development to work with us and the Planning Department to bring satisfactory closure to the density and use issues. We also request that the densities and range of uses be consistent with those allowed in the East Bay Front, which we inspired and the Inglis redevelopment which took our name.

Discussion

Planners talk about Liberty Village as a quaint little industrial relic while at the same time insist that it is an employment area. So, while the East Bay Front and the Inglis redevelopment are permitted enormous densities and the widest possible

range of uses, we are frustrated by uncertainty and hemmed in by threatened density reductions and restricted uses. The administration that created "the Kings" understood that market forces would best allocate available space and inspired a redevelopment boom.

We need your help to encourage densities and uses that do not penalize us for creating the employment growth and rescuing old buildings headed for demolition

Those who come here recognize the charm of bricks and beams, but their decisions are based on Liberty Village being one of the most wired communities in the world, on paying suburban rental rates in a downtown location, and on the ability to attract and retain employees because of the campus style accommodation, safety and convenience.

It is manifestly unfair and unproductive to saddle Liberty Village with restrictions made attractive to planners and some politicians motivated by nostalgia for an industrial vernacular that would not even be spoken had we, developers and businesses alike, not taken the risk to resurrect it with our labours. Nor is it productive to suddenly claim to know what is best for Liberty Village without reference to the opinions of the people who rebuilt it or, more importantly, without reference to the reasons why companies have migrated here.

Public Transportation

It is counter-productive for TTC to be taking away GO train stops at a time when they are more needed than ever by commuters to and from Liberty Village. The right-of way is the perfect location for the contemplated LRT. It is absurd for a downtown office community of the size and stature of Liberty Village to be car-dependent. The environmentalists on council tell us that public transportation is the way to go and oppose the FSE; then they sit idly by as the public transportation is allowed to whither.

Respectfully,
York Heritage Properties

Robert Eisenberg

Cc to other signatories:

Danny Roth – Ex Chair Liberty Village BIA
Chris Tambakis – Adgar Investments and Development Inc.
Michael Emory – Allied Properties REIT
Lynn Kennedy – Giffels Management Inc.
Abe Gitalis – Gitalis Real Estate
Mel Pearl – Lifetime Group
Marci Lipson – Lipson and Doran
Larry Saltzman – WTF Group

Cc to other recipients:

Deputy Mayor Pantelone
Councillor Perks
Chris Phibbs, Senior Advisor

-----Original Message-----

From: Robert Eisenberg
Sent: Tue 9/2/2008 8:33 AM
To: Robert Eisenberg
Subject: Request to Ec Dev