

**North York Community Council**

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**From:** Andrew Murphy <amurphy@devron.com>  
**Sent:** June 24, 2019 4:34 PM  
**To:** North York Community Council  
**Subject:** Request to appear before June 25, 2019 North York Community Council on item 2019.NY7.5  
**Attachments:** 2019.NY7.5 - Andrew Murphy (Devron).pdf

To the City Clerk:

I would like to appear before the June 25, 2019 North York Community Council to speak on item 2019.NY7.5, Final Report - Rental Housing Demolition Application - 2779-2781 Yonge Street and 15-17 and 19-21 Strathgowan Avenue

Name: Andrew Murphy  
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Notice:

When you request to speak, your name, e-mail, mailing address become part of the record of the meeting.

- The day of the meeting, your name will appear on the "Speakers List" which is posted online
- If you choose to speak, you will appear in the live broadcast and video archive of the meeting
- Your name will appear online in the meeting minutes
- For certain items, we will share your information with third-parties like the Ontario Municipal Board as required by law

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**June 25th, 2019**

**Re: 2019.NY7.5 (2779-2781 Yonge Street & 15-21 Strathgowan Avenue)**

Our company, Devron Developments, purchased 2781 Yonge St, subject to an OMB approval in principal in January of 2017. We did so with what can now be said was a very preliminary appreciation for the acrimony that had characterized the property and file under previous ownership. We knew at the time that the then-current design for the building was sorely out of context in the Lawrence Park neighbourhood, and that the existing rental units on site were in poor condition and deteriorating quickly.

In a departure from the previous application, we saw an opportunity to include fewer, larger condominium suites, that catered to residents in the surrounding single-family homes, as well as 28 high-quality rental replacement suites that we could own and operate long-term. The building design would draw on the richness of the surrounding context rather than compete with it.

At industry events, friends and competitors would ask if we were the brave group that had purchased the property. Too many rental replacement units, difficult tenants, TCHC next door, militant neighbours, the list goes on. We were, and remain, undeterred.

There were both opportunities and drawbacks to stepping into the file, mid-approval as we did: on the one hand, there was an opportunity to wipe the slate clean and foster productive relationships with all stakeholders. On the other hand, there remains the *inertia of skepticism* – a sense that development of any kind is inherently negative, whatever form it takes or the firm behind it.

Over the past 2 ½ years, we have engaged in discussions with our tenants, with the larger Community (via the Uptown Yonge Neighbourhood Alliance), and with Staff, both formally and informally, with each interaction moving the application and future project forward.

Given the acrimony of the approval in principal, the OMB order required that the applicant schedule two public consultation meetings to dialogue with all stakeholders through the Site Plan Approval process. These meetings, held in August and September of 2018, five months after our first round Site Plan submission, were well-attended by all parties and witnessed an unexpected outcome for a mid-rise redevelopment adjacent a low-rise neighbourhood: a standing ovation for proposed design. (The design would later be nominated for Best Mid-Rise Design at both the 2019 BILD and 2019 CHBA awards.)

We believe that these meetings were crucial as surrounding residents began to see the value of this proposal to their neighbourhood, and Staff were able to witness this inflection point. These consultation meetings also provided an opportunity to discuss issues that went beyond our property lines, which had been the source of much consternation. Namely, traffic infiltration and the related desire for an extension to the sidewalk along the south side of Strathgowan to connect to St Hildas.

Absent any formal requirement to do so, we have engaged our consultant team and collaborated with our neighbours, Planning, Transportation, and Forestry Staff, and Councillor Robinson's Office to arrive at a preferred option for this extension. It is our intention that we will construct this extension as part of our scheduled construction activities. [see proposed Landscape Plan L001.1 attached hereto]

While we're pleased with the progress we've made with our neighbours, we're deeply proud of the relationships we've fostered with our remaining tenants. This is our first redevelopment with existing residential tenants, and we could not have stepped into a more delicate situation. The learning curve has been steep but through the process, working closely with Housing Staff and our tenants, we've arrived at a Tenant Assistance and Relocation Plan that will allow tenants to remain in their neighbourhood, before ultimately returning to a long-term replacement unit in the to-be-constructed building.

While the process has taken much longer than we had anticipated, the reception along the way from all parties has been resoundingly positive. The Winslow, as we've named it, launched for sale in October of 2018 and is now 80% sold, with the majority of purchasers coming from the immediate area surrounding the site. With a positive Staff report on our Rental Housing Demolition application before Community Council, tenants making plans to vacate their units immediately, and all material Site Plan items now resolved, we are eagerly awaiting approval to commence construction and deliver a project befitting our future residents and the neighbourhood as a whole.

Sincerely,



*Andrew Murphy*

Director of Acquisitions and Development

