

From: [Patrick Sheils](#)
To: [councilmeeting](#)
Cc: [Councillor Jaye Robinson](#); [Parker Samuels](#); info@bwra.ca
Subject: For Garden Suites Feb 2 City Council meeting
Date: January 31, 2022 9:19:44 PM

City Councillors,

As you debate and then vote on Garden Suites, the Bedford Wanless Ratepayers Association (BWRA) would ask that you consider sending the matter back to be better researched, such that we do not replicate the errors made in Barrie, Ontario, where council had to change by-laws after initially allowing Garden Suites due to unintended consequences - see changes Barrie brought about at the bottom of this e-mail. Your role is to provide the legislation that allows for strong and clear alignment between policies and the outcomes being sought, specifically ensuring that garden suites are not investor owned, have occupancy requirements, abide by your ESG principles set out in Transform TO by protecting our tree canopy, mitigate flooding risks by reducing hardscaping and encouraging softscaping, reduce CO2 emissions by eliminating street parking for garden suites and most importantly effectively enforcing your own laws which means knowing the implications of what is to be built - no better way than having a scoped site plan filed for permitting approval.

The expectation is that garden suites will be used as a solution set for densification of current residential zoning, but it is not an explicit requirement that someone live in them. My point being that a garden suite can be a functional space that increases the footprint of a homeowner but does not increase actual densification as its use can be as an office, yoga studio, gym etc...all can be configured as a residence but serve as something else entirely. One would want to see that these policies and bylaws align with the outcomes that are being sought. This differs from laneway suites in that most laneway suites would already have a structure with an existing footprint where the upgraded structure would reside.

When it comes to ownership of the lot on which the Garden Suite is being built on, owners need to be residents of the lot to be aligned with the community and other residents. Investors should be banned from ownership as their objectives are not and can not be aligned with other residents.

At the same time Transform TO has just been approved and there is a need to align the desired risk mitigation strategy that puts forward ESG aspirations with the densification and environmental implications of laneways and garden suites particularly as they reduce softscaping. There will be no way to reverse this once it is adopted and as result would suggest that as was recommended but not adopted for laneway suites - the maximum height be six feet and hard landscaping limited to 15% and that includes walkway. For example the three levels of govt have spent billions of dollars looking to mitigate flood risk, we have to look no further than the Port Lands project by the waterfront. Let's make sure our bylaws and regulations are aligned with our aspirations.

With that in mind, neither the resident nor owner of the garden suite should not be allowed to obtain a street parking permit for the garden suite. Easy to cross reference the license plate to the address. This points to the unknown consequences of laneways and garden suites to noise, infrastructure and environment impact.

This densification effort in residential areas will see a multitude of motivations, some adhering to the precise letter of the law and resulting in the desired outcome and some will be far from that. Resulting in enraged neighbors and communities while setting potential precedents for even larger secondary dwellings. Enforcement has an important role to play and with the additional revenues that the city will be generating from these dwellings needs to incorporate an appropriate percentage to the budget for

enforcement and training of those inspectors. This should start with a scoped site plan that requires approval before anything is permitted.

As we all want to learn from the mistakes of others and establish the lessons learned, please send your proposed Garden Suite by-law changes back to be properly researched in consideration of Barrie's challenges and subsequent reversals...

Changes Barrie needed to make to By-laws more than a year after allowing Garden Suites...

In Oct 2021, Barrie had to change their Garden Suites By-laws to try to address problems stemming from their initial approval of Garden Suites. Changes made were as follows...

- o The size was reduced to 800 square feet **(vs Toronto's 1,938 square feet currently)**
- o Increased the side and rear yard setbacks to a 3m "landscape buffer" on the side and 7m at the rear. This respects neighbour privacy and allows for tree planting and shrubs **(vs Toronto's 0.6 – 1.5m on the side and rear)**
- o Height limited to 4.5m to help with privacy and restrict them to 1 storey **(vs Toronto's "as-of-right" 6.3m and 2 storeys tall)**
- o Basements are no longer permitted to help protect trees **(vs Toronto permits basements)**
- o Eliminated the minimum size permitted as the only way to make them affordable is to reduce them in size
- o Now subject to **scoped site plan control**. The applicant needs to now submit pictures of the trees on the property and **City staff inspects** for boundary trees that will be damaged.
 - o Scoped site plan approval also requires a) **Existing** grading details, services, easements and fences, vegetation and tree locations with boundary trees clearly and accurately marked b) **Proposed** grading plan, Zoning compliance matrix, Parking plan, location of walkways, servicing drawing, lighting design so that lights on the outside of the backyard house cannot affect the neighbouring properties and landscape design **(vs Toronto does not require scoped site plan approval)**

sincerely,

Patrick Sheils

Director BWRA