

From: Seaton Village Residents' Association
To: Toronto & East York Community Council Meeting

January 19, 2024

Re: Public Meeting Scheduled for: January 24, 2024
Application No. 22191847STE11SA / 22191848STE11OZ Stafford Bathurst Inc., c/o
Stafford Homes Ltd. 914 Bathurst Street, City of Toronto

Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications to permit a 12-storey mixed-use building, containing 155 residential units and 30 square metres of commercial space.

To the Toronto & East York Community Council Members and City Staff:

The following comments have been made by the 914 Bathurst Street Working Group, which is a committee of the Seaton Village Residents' Association (SVRA). Representatives of this Working Group have met with City staff and with Stafford Homes Ltd., the developer of the proposed 12 storey building at 914 Bathurst Street on July 13, 2023, and January 12, 2024. The Working Group understands that the hearing scheduled on January 24, 2024 is to consider the application for Rezoning, and that there may be a subsequent opportunity to review a Site Plan Application for this development. Since some of our concerns are not applicable to the rezoning application, we request that the City, Councillor Saxe's office and the developer continue to engage with community representatives (including SVRA) through the next stages of the approval process.

We are not objecting to the additional height and the additional storeys that are being proposed in this rezoning application. However, we have three items of concern that need to be considered in this Rezoning review process.

1. MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITY FOR RETAIL AT THE ENTIRE BATHURST STREET FRONTAGE

It would be beneficial to the community to maximize the amount of retail space along Bathurst Street at the ground floor level of this development. This would help to generate increased street activity at the front of the building. Bathurst St, between Dupont and Bloor, is gradually becoming an interesting retail street, resulting in increased pedestrian activity. The enhanced level of social interactions and community engagement will improve neighborhood safety and provide amenities for the community. The 914 Bathurst St. development will be setting a precedent for other tall residential buildings going up along this strip. We would like to ensure that there will be an ongoing commitment to include retail space at ground level by this development and in turn, by future new builds.

We recognize the developer has made changes to the proposed development by relocating ground floor residential units from Bathurst Street to Barton Avenue, and has committed to a micro retail unit on the Bathurst Street frontage. We appreciate that a By-Law has been revised to allow for the entire ground floor along Bathurst Street (including the spaces currently identified as “Indoor Amenity” spaces amounting to approximately 248 sq m) to become retail in the event the retail market picks up and the Developer decides to revert the space to retail, and would also allow the condo board to convert the space to retail in the future without requiring a rezoning. We would much prefer that the developer be clearly committing this space to retail for the long term future from the outset, as we believe that it is much less likely to happen if left to the discretion of a future condo board.

In the proposed development, currently almost all of the ground floor is dedicated to residential uses (including the “Indoor Amenity” spaces noted above). This is unacceptable. We suggest that if density is going to proceed along Bathurst north of Bloor, and within the Bathurst Street station PMTSA, then the city should consider ground floor uses in a manner analogous to those on Main Streets. Indeed the Bathurst-Bloor Four Corners Study of 2016, which applies within 100m of this site, sets an example in this regard.

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2016/te/bgrd/backgroundfile-98211.pdf>

In that Council-approved study, this area of Bathurst should be considered as a “pedestrian shopping street.” It already functions in this way.

As this is a rezoning issue, we therefore would like to see a more robust commitment for future retail space by the developer as a condition of the approval for rezoning.

2. ENSURE PUBLIC LANEWAY ENTRANCE PROVIDES SAFE PEDESTRIAN PASSAGE AND REDUCES RISK OF DAMAGE TO PRIVATE PROPERTY

The submitted drawings are not clearly illustrating how the construction will allow safe pedestrian passage along Barton Avenue while also mitigating risks from vehicles to adjacent private property.

We understand this is not a rezoning issue per se, but it is critical that this be reviewed and resolved with the active involvement of the City, and to the mutual satisfaction of the City, the developer and community representatives during the Site Plan Approval process. This may require that the City itself create additional structures on its laneway property to mitigate vehicular risks (ie, through traffic calming and bullnoses, etc). There is a long history of damage to private property at the entrance to the south laneway off Barton, and we would like to see the City finally remedy this. There is a bullnose at the entrance to the laneway, and we would like the City to revise its placement and height to the benefit of the issues herein.

3. PROVIDE ADEQUATE LANDSCAPING TO ENHANCE THE STREETScape AT
BATHURST STREET AND BARTON AVENUE

The submitted drawings provide minimal landscaping along Bathurst Street and Barton Avenue. We recognize that TTC and accessibility requirements make the provision of landscape elements along Bathurst Street more challenging; however, we firmly believe that improvements can be made to enhance the streetscape.

We ask that the developer ensures that all street trees are planted directly into the ground to current City standards.* We know that trees in planters have a limited life span in this City.

It is understood that this is not a rezoning issue, but it is important that this is reviewed and resolved, to the mutual satisfaction of the City, the developer and community representatives, during the Site Plan Approval process.

*Note the recent tree planting program on Bloor Street where all the new trees are planted at sidewalk level, despite multiple existing underground services.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Seaton Village Residents' Association
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