Ludwig, Nicole

From:	Correspondence Group, City Clerk's Office
Sent:	Wednesday, January 25, 2017 1:36 PM
To:	Public Hearing
Subject:	FW: A Software Developer's thoughts on Mount Pleasant Industrial Area zoning amendments

From: Tavis MacCallum s.22(1) Personal and Confidential
Sent: Wednesday, January 25, 2017 1:20 PM
To: Correspondence Group, City Clerk's Office
Subject: A Software Developer's thoughts on Mount Pleasant Industrial Area zoning amendments

Hello,

I just recently heard of the "Digital Zoning" changes to the Mount Pleasant Industrial Area and I felt encouraged to comment as I live nearby and am also a software engineer with some insight into the digital economy. Unfortunately I am unable to attend the meeting in person.

In general building denser buildings here and intensifying the use of the area is a good idea and I support this concept.

However I think hinging this new density on a specific digital technology use case unnecessarily adds complexity and barriers and the city will regret it in the long term.

The main issues I have are:

1. The city is making rules based on the state of the industry as it is now, but cannot predict what future technology companies will look like. It is very possible that there will be future technology companies that don't quite fit these zoning rules and won't be able to use this space. For example would the business of Food.ee or Enroot fit with the land use rules of this zoning? There are significant non-technology aspects to these businesses and yet they also do tech work and employ tech workers.

2. Tech is trendy now but it may not always be in the future. What happens if the tech bubble bursts? Empty offices? No demand to develop new buildings in Mount Pleasant? What happens if Lululemon and Arcteryx spinoff more clothing startups that boom and need more space? Will we zone some other area for specialized apparel startup zoning?

I think we're making this a lot more complicated than it needs to be. It seems like we're bending over backward to frame software development as some sort of modern manufacturing (it's not) so as to justify putting offices in industrial land. This is not necessary. We can make more effective use this industrial land by adding office space, but it's important to protect existing industrial land. Let's just do that and be clear about it.

There are probably better ways to incentivize the growth of the technology industry and helping software startups than this digital zoning idea.

On this issue there was an article recently about one of Metro Vancouver's minor tech startup success stories that may be informative to read. Towerfall is a critically and financially successful indie game that was created by a very small team in Metro Vancouver. What is interesting about this small team that built Towerfall was

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that they built it at the house they lived in in residential Richmond, likely breaking whatever residential zoning rules were in place.

The actions of the Towerfall developers make sense because it's cheap and flexible to leverage your own home when starting a small company. This story points to a potential direction for Vancouver to investigate. The vast area of low density residential land may be able to be better utilized than it is now. Software engineering is a low nuisance activity that may fit well with residential zoning.

Thank you for considering my opinion. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Tavis MacCallum