

Hildebrandt, Tina

From: Leslie Adams @5.22(1) Personal and Confidential
Sent: Tuesday, July 10, 2012 5:17 PM
To: Correspondence Group, City Clerk's Office
Subject: 800 Griffiths Way

July 10, 2012

Mayor and Council,
City of Vancouver,
412 West 12th Avenue,
Vancouver V5Y 1V4

Re: Rezoning of 800 Griffiths Way (Rogers Arena)

Dear Mayor and Councillors, I am writing as a Yaletown resident (Homer and Smythe) and as Roundhouse Board member. We have had some discussion about the rezoning for the proposed rental towers. Below are some of our considerations which I hope will be helpful to you discussions:

Overview

The Roundhouse Community Arts and Recreation Society is 100% supportive of more affordable rental housing in Vancouver.

With the proposed re-zoning of 800 Griffiths Way (Rogers Arena), we wish to encourage Mayor and Council to ensure that sound planning policies be maintained and that the project not be rushed through as a hurried decision to increase downtown rental housing. "Quick fixes" can have long term costs on immediate and neighbouring communities.

In addition to rental considerations, it is our understanding that having all three towers as rental will impact on long discussed community amenities with CAC's for these renters being financed through other channels. We hope that every effort will be made to find working solutions so that the majority, if not all, of the base NEFC amenities previously approved will be maintained.

Planning Questions

It is now generally recognized that mixed communities are the healthiest whether it is the size of units or the type of available housing. Mistakes have been made in the past in some cities where they are still "paying" socially for having built several towers with the same type of housing in one area. It is hoped that this kind of situation can be minimized as much as possible in this neighbourhood.

There are a number of rental related questions which seem worth considering - Are three rental towers in one small area generally a good planning principle or does it create a ghetto of renters? Does it create a ghetto of singles? How transient will occupants be? Would the Market Rents be affordable? What kind of mix of Market Rental and Affordable Housing are possible? What is the likely impact on near-by neighbourhoods -DTES, Chinatown and Yaletown? What impact might there be on neighbouring community centres? Is there anywhere downtown that a rental complex this large has been approved in the last couple of decades? What is the likely

long term impact of this rezoning?

If a Parking Study can be planned (p. 3, 20), surely a Rental or Social Development Study can also be identified!

While rental units are generally a welcome addition to any neighbourhood, rental housing does not necessarily mean affordable housing. There is concern with the lack of affordable housing in the City that this development, while potentially advantageous in many ways, does not address some Vancouver's most pressing housing needs. Would these units provide Attainable Housing?

It is our understanding that 25% of the units could be two and three bedrooms making the towers of greater interest to couples and families. It is hoped that the facilities will be built in such a way as to appeal to these groups and we encourage the Managing Director of Social Development to support more family units to benefit the immediate and neighbouring communities. (P. 10) Diversity of residents makes for a more interesting, more solid and less transient community for the long term.

The City of Vancouver's recently released plan, *Bold Ideas Towards an Affordable City*, recommends reducing red tape for developers. While concerned about rushing into a decision about a significant new approach to a large development on the last remaining downtown land adjacent to waterfront and immediately adjacent to diverse neighbourhoods, I empathize with developers that some of these processes do seem to drag on. In fact, when the Aquilinis introduced the idea of one rental tower in a much earlier plan, the proposal seemed interesting – with good potential. (This proposal 'died'.) Personally, one tower made sense. Three, I don't know.

Community Amenities

It is our understanding the Planning Department is revising the proposed CAC's to accommodate the impact of the 800 Griffiths plan and feel it would be pre-mature to approve this re-zoning application without knowing more details. This would include the impact on community amenities for the whole area, particularly given Council's previous recommendations and the extensive discussions about CAC's in the past years and the importance of the overall NEFC infrastructure being well planned out.

The general Roundhouse Society priorities identified for 5 b East and West (Feb. 17, 2011) would also largely apply to amenities related to this location – including adequate recreation, arts and culture for residents, 20% social housing, sufficient daycare. These amenities benefit the immediate community and have implications for adjacent neighbourhoods.

Other

Noise Given to proximity to large scale entertainment venues, the potential health and noise impacts for future residents and the livability of the area in general is of concern. We understand much attention has been paid to noise mitigation measures and want to encourage council to pay close attention to this in the future. It would be helpful to have access to comparative studies (high density developments near large entertainment venues) to better assess the challenges posed.

Traffic flow With ten thousands of spectators accessing and exiting these venues in a short time span, the area often experiences gridlock. Increased public transit options need to be developed for these new residents and to ensure the flow in other neighbourhoods.

Process

From a community perspective, this Rezoning Application has been moved along quickly. Joint Working Group minutes were distributed June 22, 2012 and did not afford the amount of time we would have liked to more fully discuss the rezoning considerations with Roundhouse Society members prior to this July 10 Public Hearing. In future, we would appreciate more notice so as to provide more comprehensive input related to our neighbourhood and services. This proposed rezoning has numerous worthwhile aspects and deserves more time for reflection and discussion.

Closing

In summary, I can see it may be seductive to address rental housing with this Rezoning application but Vancouver doesn't need a 'quick fix' which then needs more fixing down the road, rather, a well thought through planning process including ongoing community consultations. We strongly encourage you to move efficiently and also wisely.

Leslie Adams
Yaletown resident
Roundhouse Board Member
Chair, Exterior Committee