

Ludwig, Nicole

From: Correspondence Group, City Clerk's Office
Sent: Friday, April 10, 2015 1:27 PM
To: Public Hearing
Subject: FW: 508 Helmcken Street

From: Omi, Oliver s.22(1) Personal and Confidential
Sent: Friday, April 10, 2015 1:10 PM
To: Correspondence Group, City Clerk's Office; Hoese, Karen
Subject: 508 Helmcken Street

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing in support of the rezoning amendment for 508 Helmcken Street. The rental stock in Vancouver (especially the Downtown) is scarce and in high demand. Providing additional rental housing, especially at the low end of the market, would help combat the housing crisis the residents of Vancouver are now experiencing.

Thank you,

Oliver Omi

s.22(1) Personal and Confidential





April 2, 2015
Mayor and Council
City of Vancouver
453 West 12th Ave.
Vancouver, BC
V5Y 1V4

Subject: Rezoning of 508 Helmcken Street from DD to CD-1

Mayor and Councillors,

We have been briefed by the proponents on the proposed rezoning of 508 Helmcken Street from DD to CD-1. After careful deliberation, we offer our unconditional support for this rezoning application for the following reasons:

1. The current site is under-utilized and the density proposed is appropriate for the neighbourhood that is primarily high density residential;
2. The new residents will live in a neighbourhood rich in amenities (i.e. nearby parks, Seawall, transit, shops) thereby encouraging active transportation and reducing their need to own and operate a vehicle;
3. The project adds purpose-built rental into a neighbourhood that is primarily condominium ownership;
4. The replacement of Jubilee House on the site across the street will allow the current residents to remain in the same neighbourhood in a new building; and,
5. The project will provide much needed child care spaces as well as jobs and a secure, long-term location for the Montessori school previously located at 1079 Richards Street.

In closing, the DV BIA is pleased to support projects that will increase residential density in the Downtown South District where choice of use is allowed and, conversely, to only support projects that increase job space in the Central Business District. This balance will help grow job space in a concentrated area that has the best public transportation in the Metro Vancouver region whilst providing a mix of housing options within easy walking distance of employment opportunities.

Sincerely,
DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION (DV BIA)

Charles Gauthier, MCP
President & CEO

c.c. Ms. Karen Hoese – City of Vancouver Rezoning Centre

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Mayor Gregor Robertson
and Council Members
City Hall
City Clerk's Office
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 1V4

Dear Mayor Robertson and Councillors,

RE: Re-zoning 508 Helmcken Street, New Jubilee House

I understand that some Yaletown residents are opposing the re-development of this social housing building. By using the courts to attempt to overturn carefully deliberated decisions made by elected officials, they are wasting public resources (court time, legal fees, city staff time, etc) in order to pursue an elitist point of view. Jubilee House and its residents have been a part of this community long before the opponents moved into Yaletown. Surely, there is room for a diverse population. Since 1986, when JH was established, at least 35 high rises have been built in this area. If space can be allocated for dozens of market-level towers, it is reasonable and fair that a residence such as JH be included in the Yaletown landscape.

I commend you and your staff for finding a creative solution to the problem of funding for the replacement of this social housing unit. I can appreciate that it took countless staff hours to negotiate an acceptable package with the developer. I want to encourage you to stay the course and not give way to the mean-spirited, narrow point of view of a few opponents.

Support for social housing in Vancouver, whether new or re-newed as is the case for JH, is an important platform of city council. I am a long-time resident and homeowner in Vancouver; I heartily endorse the goal for increased low-cost housing, and for the re-development of Jubilee House.

Sincerely,

s.22(1) Personal and Confidential

Sondra Marshall

To the Mayor and Members of Council:

Although I hope to speak to council about the 508 Helmcken Street Rezoning - in case I do not make it, or there is not enough time to make some points I wish to make, this brief written submission has been sent to you.

First off all, it is important to understand that this development is more than a simple rezoning. The approval or non-approval of this project will be a game changer for the neighbourhood. It will define the final direction that will be taken for the evolution of the Downtown South. Both the current ruling party and the main opposition party have a stake in this.

No doubt, for the current ruling party, Vision Vancouver, one main imperative for approval has to do with the housing strategy it has adopted. For the main opposition party, the NPA, there may be some buy in to this if it agrees with parts of this strategy, but even if it does not, nevertheless, the NPA has a stake in the approval of this project, as well. And that has to do with a promise it made to the working class and lower-income residents of the Downtown South, when it was the ruling party in the 1990s. As it was an NPA council that approved the goals and guidelines for the Downtown South back then.

If you look at the goals you will see that the second one has to do with social inclusion and support for social housing. This made social housing an embodiment of the public interest; giving it an ethical weight and standing with regard to the direction in the deliberations and the plans of decision makers in the Downtown South. But more than this, I feel the declaration was also a promise made to the people that lived in the neighbourhood at the time. This is clear to me, as I sat in on the deliberations that took place in the public meetings, which led to the articulation of goals for the Downtown South in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Such a promise made social housing a moral commitment, distinct but related to the ethical commitment that has to do with making a decision which is carried out in the public interest. Therefore, there is an ethical dimension to this rezoning. However, at the same time, there is also a moral one that has to do with making and keeping a promise.

An obligation to the existing residents was made by the City 25 years ago, and it should be kept. Serving the public interest is an ethical practice, keeping a promise is a moral one. And both should be at play. Without belabouring the point, however, a moral commitment requires more vigorous action than a declaration of the public interest (that provides ethical guidance to planners and decision makers, such as you on City Council).

And actions always speak louder than words, particularly when it comes to promises and obligations. If Council does not approve this rezoning, no matter what consoling words follow, be they well meaning or not, a promise will have been broken. This is clear to me. The City will have made itself a promise breaker rather than a promise keeper.

A negative decision will also underline to everyone that Social diversity is no longer important. The same for fair play, that is to say the keeping of promises. Rather the message will be registered loud and clear: Opulence and privilege have been given more weight than basic social needs. If this project is not allowed to proceed it is hard to see how any decent recovery for social housing in the neighbourhood will be possible after this.

I cannot see how this symbolism can be avoided. If the City votes no it may as well rename Emery Barnes Park after someone like Barbara Amiel, which would be more in keeping with the turn to opulence, exclusivity, and the homogeneity that will likely result. For with this turn, the mixed income nature of the community will be undermined and its historic soul lost.

Of course, if the City approves this rezoning, something quite remarkable will happen. In terms of complexity and sophistication, albeit, on a much smaller scale, but in many way just as ambitious, the impact of 508 Helmcken Street and 1099 Richards Street (*in tandem with the redevelopment of the corner of Seymour and Helmcken now underway*) may well match the effect that the Woodward's development had on Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. And Vancouver will be able to take bragging rights for having provided the country with another example of how a complex process of socially inclusive city building can take place. with limited resources.

I sit on the Board of a Community Development Corporation in the Woodward's building, and I see what happened there, can happen here in the Downtown South. Just as the Woodward's development guaranteed that the Western part of the Downtown Eastside will always be a mixed-use, mixed-income area, where social housing is mixed seamlessly with rentals and luxury condos - I see something similar happening to this enclave in The Downtown South, if this development is allowed to proceed.

Sincerely,

Bart Reid

s.22(1) Personal and Confidential

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

Re: Re-zoning of 508 Richards Street

Dear Sirs:

The purpose of this letter is to ask that the rezoning of 508 Helmcken Street be approved in order to enable the construction of the Brenhill Tower. As you know, this will make it possible to pay for the construction of New Jubilee House a project of the 127 Society for Housing.

I am a resident and tax-payer in the City of Vancouver and a supporter of the work of the 127 Society for Housing. I take great pride in the work that the 127 Society for Housing has been able to accomplish by providing social assistance and affordable housing for people at risk of being homeless in this city, especially low-income seniors. Thus the project to replace deteriorating Jubilee House with New Jubilee House is to my mind both responsible and proactive by continuing to provide safe, clean, alternative housing to these people, some of whom have lived in Yaletown since 1986.

Not only does the previous support shown to this project reflect the good will of many citizens of our city, but it also provides tangible evidence of the intent of the Mayor and Vision Vancouver to work towards resolving the important problem of homelessness in Vancouver. Projects such as New Jubilee House also demonstrate the power of joint projects between the City and the private sector. I sincerely hope that the emergence of anti-social-housing groups will not lead to cessation of this and similar housing projects across the city.

Sincerely,

s.22(1) Personal and Confidential

F. William Orr, MD