

Dear Mayor and Councillors

I am writing to you with respect to 114 Richmond Road and the position of the Hampton Iona Community Group. As you may be aware, the referenced property is located within the boundaries of our community association. Our association and myself personally have been closely involved with both the review of this application and the development of the Community Design Plan and the Secondary Plan over the past several years.

I am writing to you at this time as I am not sure that I will be able to attend the PEC meeting on November 16 due to a family emergency and I may be still be out of town at the time of the meeting. I am attaching for your information the submission that our Community Group made to staff in June 2010 on this proposal as well as the presentation that I was planning to make at the PEC meeting on September 28 and which I would be giving on November 16. I would encourage you to review the attached, particularly as the Staff report did not truly reflect the extent of our Association's comments and concerns.

Hampton Iona Community Group is not in favour of the applicant's (Ashcroft Homes) requested development nor the staff recommendation. We are against it on the following grounds.

1. The proposal does not live up to the intent of the Secondary Plan. As one of the framers of the plan, when we referred to 4 stories on the south side of the property, we meant everything south of the convent building, not just what abutted Byron Avenue. As the residential neighbourhood south of Richmond Road is all 2-3 stories, we agreed to 4 stories as this reflected how modern townhouses tend to be built (similar to what was built at St. George's Yard and the behind Canadian Banknote - two developments of which we had no objections) but we do note that the Secondary plan does not prohibit an apartment type structure as long as they are only 4 stories. While there are various buildings along Richmond Road that are in the 7-8 storey range, this was before the secondary plan was in place. We were told at the time the Secondary Plan was passed, that this would set the requirements for future development and that prior development would not be a precedent. In any case, there are two condos within a few blocks east of Island Park that are only 6 stories if you want to site precedent. As well, this site is not a gateway, Island Park Drive is the gateway to the Richmond Road corridor. The site is also too far from the Westboro Transit station to get a LEED credit, so the availability of transit should not be a factor in considering greater heights and densities.
2. We are totally opposed to the use of any portion of the Bryon Linear Park to be used as an access road to the proposed development. I note that this is also the position of the Parks and Recreation staff. There is no precedent within at least 50 years of any changes to the Byron Linear Park. The City is under no obligation to provide public park land to a private developer nor can the OMB opine on this. This access would not be needed if the proposed development did not have so many units. As such, we urge PEC and council to pass a motion at the same time as the development application is reviewed which clearly indicates that the City will not be providing any public parkland as access to this development. Given that the lack of this access may require Ashcroft to rethink their proposed development, we urge you to give a clear message on November 16 that there will be no access through the Park.
3. Traffic in the neighbourhood is steadily getting worse over the years. The Transportation Department has also sited the failures of adjacent intersections and that Ashcroft's proposal does nothing to mitigate traffic issues in the neighbourhood. As well, smart growth should require that infrastructure problems be resolved before densities are increased. Once you solve the problems, then you can add new development. You don't add the development and then try to solve the resulting problems or even worse, just ignore them. As a professional engineer, I can attest that when developing a system, you try to maintain balance and steady state. This means you slowly act and react as required. This development represents a massive "act" to which the City can barely "react". I also note that many of Ashcroft's traffic measurements were taken during March break. As such traffic on Byron was significantly decreased as Byron serves 4 schools. The City's traffic counts also tend to be taken in the

- summer which can result in significant under measurement of traffic, particularly as Byron serves several neighbourhood schools. You only have to listen to morning and evening traffic reports to know that Island Park and many of its intersections are at failure almost every day.
4. There is no indication that the proposed development will be compatible with the surrounding community or the Convent. While some aspects of compatibility will be dealt with in the site plan, other aspects as such as height are dealt with under zoning. Given the presence and importance of the convent and as noted by the independent heritage report, there is a need to respect the convent. The heights being proposed by Ashcroft do not respect the convent, particularly on the south side and will dwarf and mask the convent which is only 15m or approximately 4 stories high. As noted above, these heights also do not respect the surrounding residential community. Council gave the entire site heritage designation. This should mean something when considering the actual rezoning application.
 5. The City of Ottawa has several community design plans and Secondary Plans in place. While the tone of the wording varies between them, if the intent of the Westboro/Richmond Road secondary plan is not followed, there is no reason why one should expect any other such plan in this city to be followed. Most plans speak to height, density limits and the need for compatibility. If Council does not consider this important in Westboro, why should it be important in any neighbourhood? Westboro is considered to be one of Ottawa's top "urban neighbourhoods". While we are in favour of intensification, we do not want to see Westboro destroyed by over-intensification. The negative effects will be left for the community to deal with long after a developer has turned their building over to the condo corporation. Most councillors fight for their neighbourhoods. If council is to truly reflect a "city view" they should fight for all city neighbourhoods and all secondary plans not just their own communities and wards.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am hoping to be back in time to present at the Nov. 16 meeting but as you can understand, family issues must take precedent.

Yours respectfully,

Lorne Cutler, P.Eng., MBA
President
Hampton Iona Community Group