Deferral of the severance/variances applications for 88 Laburnham

I support the Planning Department and Councillor on their recommendations for deferral. The deferral recommendations started a few months ago in response to Long Branch community concerns. The first mini community meeting is to be held on February 24th. The idea is to find some common ground. This has been done successfully on 2 properties in the past. (see attached). But it has not been done for years.

Now that COA refusals have been overturned by the OMB up to 90% of the time. an applicant simply wants a decision to appeal to the OMB. They avoid any constructive dialogue.

We need to develop a process with community meetings before a hearing as Councillor Vaughan used to do so successfully. Once a process is established to always require community meetings, applicants are going to come forward at the outset.

The severance/variance applications are now far more complex and impactful than 10 to 15 years ago when 10% was rule of thumb and variances really were minor. Neighbours had few concerns.

COA applications now are more like zonings where a community meeting is required prior to a decision. Residents at least need basic information and explanation from informed sources. The circulation does not include elevations, bird's eye views or diagrams to show impacts. The system sets highly paid professionals against uninformed residents. The David and Goliath balance needs to be restored locally.

The COA notices sent a couple of weeks beforehand are usually gobbledygook to the recipient. They are in technical jargon which means nothing to them. Most notices are discarded. People have not normally time to comprehend, visit the Committee of Adjustment Offices, or draw technical conclusions never mind attend a hearing. Attending a Committee of Adjustment meeting is time consuming and intimidating for most people. To level the playing field and act fairly those affected need to be apprised of all the facts and process including requesting the Councillor to initiate City Legal and Planning representation at the OMB hearing. Also if applications are approved they need to know that the City can appeal within a short time frame but need action from the Councillor. That is another reason for a community meeting. As well with a community meeting, improvements to the overall scheme can be obtained even if approval is given. This was done by the Committee for 24 33rd Street which was deferred last meeting which is the best way forward. Great! The applicant has gone back to the drawing board.

Another aspect is that where we have 2 applications side by side such as 56 and 58 Ash there could be real planning by having 3 houses instead of 4. With a community meeting before a decision preferably before application this may be possible. Recent applications 2 & 4 Shamrock are the same.

The different outcome for these two also means that the Zoning and Official Plan are being largely ignored since for 56 there was no spoken opposition. Yet it is the mandate of the Committee of Adjustment to ensure good planning. Mississauga simply do not allow severances when the dip below the required frontage. The City has recently clarified that the neighbourhood protection of character is critical and overrides density considerations by adopting stronger revisions to the Official Plan.

It is incumbent on the applicant to prove their case and this involves addressing each relevant OP policy including 2.2.1, 3.1.2.3, and 4.1.5. The OMB's interpretation of minor seems laughable.

The OMB has created pain and anger in the Long Branch Community and makes a mockery of good planning. They are basically an arm of the development industry. At the local level we need to stick to principles, rationality and good planning.

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