

March 10, 2023

Rick Tipping



The Town of the Blue Mountains  
32 Mill Street,  
Thornbury, ON  
N0H 2P0

Re: 125 Peel St. - Campus of Care

Attn: Mayor Matrosovs, Deputy Bordignon and Councillors

In response to staff report FAF.23.036, I suggest both the Gateway and the Campus of Care projects are the result of political ambition, impulsive and erratic decision making and rather than good planning supported by the accumulation of quantitative data. The 2018 Labour Study specifically advised an independent needs study be completed to accurately determine the housing needs of each individual community. This recommendation was ignored and has resulted in a series of costly missteps contributing to the eventual failure of the Gateway project.

I believe as others have suggested, housing should be a coordinated effort of all levels of government in the South Georgian Bay area including the Province. It was foolish and reckless to believe our municipality had the resources to go it alone.

The decision to assume the lead in a private sector health care initiative, Campus of Care, was again unwarranted and outside the purview of the Municipality. Aside from the costs, this diverted staff time and energy, diluting their effectiveness in dealing with their normal responsibilities to the detriment to the tax-payer. At the public meeting for the disposition of 125 Peel St, residents questioned whether data had been collected or considered as to the needs. In response staff report FAF.22.047 stated "Outside of the ongoing review of our community demographics and collaboration with our community stakeholders there is a general understanding that a significant need exists to increase the range and stock of housing options within the Town." Obviously, the focus is not on long term care.

Sadly, I find it unconscionable the previous Council would use this sensitive issue to negate our building height limits and promote their attainable housing agenda. Also, given the inadequate number of respondents, the accuracy or findings of the 2021 Thornbury Density and Intensification Study are questionable at best and does not support height increase. This premise is further supported when the previous mayor at a senior's without walls meeting responded to my wife when she questioned excessive height by stating it was more profitable. SkyDev in response to resident's concerns with height and density with the proposed Meaford development stated it is all about

profitability. It should now be obvious to all that density and height favours corporate profits to the detriment of the community. Once again evidence of a corrupt and secretive process to achieve political ambition and promote private sector profitability at the expense of the community.

Finally, the report states that the Campus of Care proponents did not meet the minimum mandatory scoring requirements. Ignoring this and the Town's purchasing policies, Council instructed staff to open negotiations. Why? This questions the transparency and the integrity of the process and sends a clear message to the developer that Council is desperate. A reckless decision that placed the Town's negotiating team in an untenable position. As a result, the developer took the lion's share of the available property and left the Town with scraps. What is extremely disturbing is the fact that the Council demonstrated absolutely no consideration for the community's welfare. This once again is so symptomatic of the questionable decision making of the previous Council.

To conclude, with the purchase of 125 Peel, residents have been misled or deceived into believing the property would be used for future community initiatives. This process has been cloaked in closed meetings, lack of public consultation and unsupportable actions that has resulted in a loss of confidence, transparency and credibility creating an atmosphere of suspicion around all decisions. Madam Mayor, you were the project lead. You had the opportunity to make changes. The newly elected councillors were denied the opportunity to get up to speed. You are using the CIHA to over-ride the current building height standards, facilitate private sector profits and suppress the voices of the community. There are indicators these actions may constitute a misuse of public funds, abuse of power, breach of trust, land speculation, disregard of the Municipal Act and Town policies.

Madam Mayor, you were elected and are charged with defending community values. Only through your strong, decisive, transparent and accountable actions will you earn the confidence of the entire community. The Town is under a constant assault from unnecessary development that jeopardizes the Town's character, quality of life, farm land and the natural environment as a result of insatiable corporate greed. Not all have the capacity to assume these weighty responsibilities and respond effectively. Madam Mayor, you can choose to follow the example of your predecessor or by your actions restore transparency, credibility, accountability and rebuild public confidence and respect,

Respectfully

Rick Tipping  
cc: Town Clerk- Ms Corrina Giles