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Town of the Blue Mountains
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RE: Campus of Care

Deputation Request, April 30th Committee of the Whole

Dear Madame Chair and Councillors,

First, I want council to be aware that their hard work and effort in what must, at times, feel like a blizzard of issues swirling about is appreciated. We all know the decision making process on behalf of a community is complex. And so with respect, my deputation will address 3 of our 8 key areas of concern regarding decision-making relating to the Campus of Care project.

1. Concerns with Policy and Long term Planning
2. Concerns with the Financial Burden on Residents
3. Concerns with Environmental Impact of disturbing Old Orchard Lands

1. Concerns with Policy and Long term Planning

There is a perception among residents that development is being prioritized over the long term welfare and preferences of the community. An example is the recent decision to allow a multi resident development in Clarksburg that changes the community's character, and may well prove unsuitable for well and septic service. The decision to approve was by a narrow margin, and the community felt excluded in the decision making. As a result of the lack of community input/council consultation some residents of TBM have lost some degree of confidence in council.

Social Capital

We often hear about a community's capital in terms of fiscal solvency or economic value. A community's social capital is rarely referred to, but it is tangible and important. So what is social capital and why am I so bothered by what I perceive as a lack of regard for its value in relation to the current planning process of the town with regard to 125 peel South?

The big idea in social capital is that social networks have value and that social networks enhance our communities.¹ It reminds us the informal, positive bonds between individuals have value and build inclusive supportive communities. Social capital is built through hundreds of little and big actions we take every day. On the small scale for example the proposed enhancement of Moreau Park is clearly communicated to every one passing by the excellent large display explaining what is planned and how to comment. Each time someone stops and read, converses and shares, networks are being strengthened. Social capital increases. On a bigger scale, think of the contributions of the all the individuals who have made up the BVO over forty years. Think also of our community members' response to COVID. Remember the teams wiping down the carts at Foodland. Dozens of individuals making hundreds of meals which were distributed through churches and other local organizations every week for months on end.

This community is rich in social capital. Council has a key role in keeping this community rich in social capital. When elected leaders act with transparency, excellent communication and clear adherence to long term policy and planning the livability of a community for its members is enhanced.

The Campus of Care project is notable for a lack of consultation. There is no big billboard there explaining it all. The property was sold to the town with the understanding a primary use would be for recreational facilities. I wonder what percentage of residents even know it has been subsequently

¹ <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/programs/saguaro/about-social-capital>
The Harvard Kennedy School of Civic Engagement: About Social Capital

sold to a developer? What consultation was there regarding the pros and cons of 160 bed for profit LTC?

Overwhelmingly, according to Andre Picard author of Neglected No More Canadian seniors want to age in place with community support initiatives, especially since Ontarian seniors saw first hand the effects of COVID in LTC institutions. Ontario long-term care (LTC) home residents experienced disproportionately high [morbidity](#) and [mortality](#), both from [COVID-19](#) and from the conditions associated with the COVID-19 [pandemic](#)².

*Further, in the wake of COVID the fear is that governments will put all their attention and money into making LTC facilities safer and building more of them. That would be a disaster. We have to fundamentally rethink the challenge of caring for people as they age. ... LTC can not be considered in isolation. We have to consider the place of community care, of supportive housing, of aging in place. There is nothing more important than where people live.*³

A great deal of thought and planning needed to take place before an understanding of what constitutes the best use of the 32 acres at 125 Peel St South before reaching a decision. There was no direct consultation. Currently, the idea is to house 1000 people on 18 acres. As of 2021, the population of Thornbury was 3474.⁴ That's over a quarter of the population of Thornbury. We need supports for seniors, we will need some LTC beds but is the campus of care appropriate land use? Would this situation have reached this stage without an MZO?

I think it is very important as well, that the community understands that a LTC facility here does not mean it is necessarily for the residents of here. LTCs are governed by provincial policy. Waiting lists play a role and Ontarians wanting an LTC bed list their top three choices anywhere in the province. .

² <https://covid19-sciencetable.ca/sciencebrief/covid-19-and-ontarios-long-term-care-homes-2/> Key author Dr. Peter Juni

³ 'Aging in Place' Stacy Landau CEO of SPRINT Senior Peoples Resources in North Toronto pp138-144 in Neglected No More: The Urgent Need to Improve the Lives of Canadian Elders in the Wake of a Pandemic Andre Picard Random House Canada 2021

⁴ Population of Thornbury Statistics Canada 2021

As well as thinking further on what quality of life looks like for elders, the Campus of Care project really needs to stop until updated and far more sophisticated Traffic Impact Surveys are completed. And until there is viable official secondary plan for Thornbury West.

2. Concerns with the Financial Burden on Residents

We have concerns with the financial burden on the broader community. What exactly is it going to cost the ratepayers of TBM to provide 160 beds of for profit care? Are we the ratepayers getting a good deal...or is the benefit primarily to the developer?

We in Thornbury West also have concerns with the costs of the disruption and financial burden of having sewer and water arrive versus the benefits. For some there are definite benefits, for others not at all. Our home, completed in 2018 is less than two hundred metres from 125 Peel St South. It is the newest in the neighbourhood that will be affected by the sewer/water installation.

Town council did not plan to bring sewer and water out this way so promptly until an MZO brought this idea for the Campus of Care into being.

In 2018, Town Council's focus was on the development of the old Foodland property and passing an updated official plan. Neither transpired. Now, the focus is on a massive undertaking in Thornbury West. There is no updated official plan. Nor is there a formal detailed secondary plan for Thornbury West. We are rightly concerned about the scope of this project.

Just six years ago we paid \$25000 in development fees to town and county and another \$25000 for well and septic. Requirements re well and septic are stringent and that is as it should be. You can see, however, why there is no benefit to us being burdened with another large bill. We have a new and excellent water and waste system - and not many years left to amortize.

3. Concerns with Environmental Impact of disturbing Old Orchard Lands

The thirty two acre site is old orchard land. Ontario orchardists were pleased in the 1940's when a control for codling moth was developed. Lead Arsenate was effective, applied frequently, and widely used for

several decades. It's use was discontinued when DDT was introduced. DDT has been banned in Ontario since 1970 and fortunately it's short half life in soil (2-15 years) means recovery is happening. Lead with a half life of about 700 years and arsenic's far longer, as well as their toxicity to us and most living organisms is a problem. We know old orchards have contaminated soil and, we know the arsenic in particular leaches and thus can end up in water courses. We also know the level of residue varies from property to property. How does the fact this project got underway via an MZO affect application of provincial law and environmental studies and regulations?

A tributary of the Little Beaver passes right through the site. What level of contamination does that water course have? How will it be remediated? We've asked to read the preliminary reports. They were not available. When will reports be made available to residents?

Thank you for your attention to these concerns regarding 1. Long term Planning and Policy, 2. Financial Burden to residents and 3. Environmental Impacts of developing Old Orchard lands. These concerns are significant and must be addressed, but they pale in comparison to the traffic and safety issues that will arise from concentrating an increase equal to 28% of Thornbury's population, plus commercial enterprise, plus a daycare onto 125 Peel St South.