

Date: June 4, 2021

To: Tecumseh Town Council

From: Tamra Tobin Teno
[REDACTED] Little River Blvd., Tecumseh

Re: Briday's proposed development for 12433 Dillon Rd., Tecumseh.
Submission for Regular Council Meeting on June 8, 2021

In November, 2019, Mr. Ublansky of Briday held a "public consultation meeting". It was simply an outrageous scare-tactic warning of a proposal, with the very obvious, sole purpose of making his current design look more acceptable and him appear reasonable. Ever since then we have been trying to get the Town Administration's attention about how wrong this proposal is. Mr. Ublansky's overly-crowded, ugly development is driven by profit and, based on the reports presented to Council, the Town Administration is in lockstep with his wishes.

Problem

All three reports prepared for Council by Mr. Hillman are written from the perspective of being the flag bearer for Mr. Ublansky and defending his proposal. Mr. Hillman has it backwards. As employees of the Town, he and his staff should have been reviewing the proposal from the perspective of protecting the Town from bad development proposals. Unfortunately, his reports have been nothing but cheerleading for Mr. Ublansky, trying to find creative ways to obfuscate and shepherd the development through.

Infilling and Intensification

When the Town refused to buy the school property so the neighbourhood could still have its much-needed and mandated recreational space, we knew the land would be developed. Then the Town decided to direct the sale of the McColl land to Mr. Ublansky so he could have more property. We understand about infilling and residential intensification. We're not against it. But what we expected was a *reasonable* approach. We expected a development

that would “respect and enhance the local context and contribute to it in a positive way” as per the language of our Official Plan (OP). Instead, we have been sorely disappointed.

Several years ago, the Town approved the Pinewood Crescent development directly north of Briday’s property. The Pinewood area, along with the houses fronting on Dillon south of it, is slightly bigger than the buildable area of Briday’s property. The Town approved 17 houses on Pinewood, bringing the total number of houses on that chunk of property to 22. In comparison, Briday wants **63** on its smaller piece of land across the street.

Then, only about 7 years ago, Council approved a moderate increase in density for the Carmelita Court area resulting in 48 units on 7.1 acres. Applying that same density precedent to Briday’s buildable area of 4.87 acres, the density would be an acceptable 32 units. But Briday wants **63**. Mr. Ublansky’s planners rationalize this density by simply announcing it is appropriate and, of course, Mr. Hillman acquiesces. In his most current report, Mr. Hillman advises that the density, scale and massing issues from the first meeting were resolved, but they are not. Simply saying it doesn’t make it so.

Intensification means the development of a property at a higher density than currently exists. It does NOT mean cram in as many units as possible and then announce that it fits. For his property, Mr. Ublansky is asking for an intensification increase of **6,300%** from when the school was there. I ask Council - would you want that in your backyard? Would it compliment your neighbourhood? Do you think that density increase enhances our small-scale residential neighbourhood? And don’t forget, in terms of scale, Mr. Ublansky’s project boasts a whopping **265%** greater scale than that of the surrounding area. How is that similar or complimentary to the existing neighbourhood? Mr. Hillman has said this is a ‘modest’ increase, but in this context, the definition of the word would mean ‘not very large in size or amount’. Clearly, Mr. Hillman is wrong.

Medium Density

Mr. Ublansky wants to change the current zoning of Community Facility and R1 to R3 and Recreational. Despite that, both he and Mr. Hillman believe the medium density allowance for a Community Facility should be automatically given to Briday’s development. Mr. Hillman goes to great lengths to parse the words used in the applicable OP to try and make the point

that greater than small-scale infilling is appropriate. He claims the phrase “Council will encourage small scale infilling” really means ‘medium density’ (read: ‘it is okay to shoehorn in Mr. Ublansky’s over-crowded proposal’).

Next, Mr. Hillman states that the former school was ‘quite distinct’ from a residential use so the neighbourhood should already be accustomed to something other than ‘small-scale’ residential uses. His implication is: we can all just get accustomed to Mr. Ublansky’s development. Well, besides being dismissive and insulting, Mr. Hillman’s comment makes no sense. A school is *expected* to be in a small-scale residential neighbourhood and no one had to ‘get used to it’. That’s why everyone built houses here - so their kids could go that school. The neighbourhood grew up around the school and its school yard was used as recreation and park land. The school did not detract from, but rather complimented our small-scale ambience, our small-scale community, The school was the backbone of it. Mr. Hillman’s rationalization fails miserably.

By my count, in his reports to Council Mr. Hillman has disrespected the neighbourhood twice: First, he agreed with Mr. Ublansky’s assertion that our neighbourhood had no character. And now, he smugly implies we can all just get used to Mr. Ublansky’s proposal.

Mr. Ublansky is determined to plunk a medium density development in the middle of a low-density neighbourhood. So, to assist him, Mr. Hillman continues to flog the irrelevant idea that a Community Facility zoning permits a higher density. So what? Mr. Ublansky is asking to get rid of the Community Facility designation to enable him to build a residential development. As such, he does not get to compare himself favorably with what could have been built there. It is important to remember that a community facility is for the benefit of the entire community and a higher density allowance for such a facility is more tolerable because of it. Mr. Ublansky’s desire for more density is only for more personal profit, and it benefits only him. Neither the neighbourhood nor the Town get any benefit whatsoever.

Former (yet guiding) Official Plan

Mr. Hillman states that section 3.3.1 (ii) of the OP allows medium density uses to be up to a maximum of 30 units per hectare. Subtracting out the non buildable areas (parkette,

stormwater management pond and the Little River pedestrian access) of Mr. Ublansky's property, he has roughly 1.97 hectares for building. This means the max number of units he should ask for is 59. He wants 63. Section 3.3.1.ii prohibits this for medium density.

Next, Mr. Hillman recites the OP language in section 3.1.1 (iii) where Council will look at the need for the proposal through an analysis of housing supply and demand. For his analysis, Mr. Hillman simply relies on Mr. Ublansky's assertion that market demand for his style of development exists. It is acknowledged that 2015 Housing Intensification paper supports more housing options for a varied, especially older, population. However, these 2 statements do not justify a crowded development with 3 storey walk-ups where only 16 (25%) of the units will be suitable for an older population. And the 2 statements certainly do not validate ruining the oldest neighbourhood in Town. As has been pointed out before, if Mr. Ublansky and Mr. Hillman were so concerned about serving the Town's older population, a density-laden project would have been put in Mr. Ublansky's Lakewood South development next to the high-density buildings, across the street from shops and grocery stores. One can agree this type of proposed development may be acceptable in the abstract for the Town, but it certainly is NOT justified for the Dillon Road property.

Traffic

Mr. Hillman relies on Mr. Ublansky's paid consultants to assert there are no traffic issues. Additionally, Mr. Hillman insists the OP language discouraging medium density projects on a local road is to be read as saying: 'it's okay as long as there are only 5 houses fronting on Dillon heading toward Lesperance Road.' How convenient. Then, Mr. Ublansky's traffic consultant chose to review only the morning and evening peak hours and determined that the school would have generated more traffic than the proposed development! It is important to note that because Victoria school was such a small school with about 150 students and a handful of staff, the consultant admitted the numbers were too small to show up in even the lowest range of the comparable data he used. So, he chose the average sized school range which of course does not apply. One can certainly find fault with his conclusions. Having said that, it is simply ludicrous to even think a small school with bussed in students and a few staff

entering and leaving twice a day, 5 days a week for effectively 9 months of the year would generate MORE traffic than **63** residences with people, friends, deliveries, service people, etc. entering and exiting all day long, **7** days a week, **12** months of the year. As such, Mr. Hillman's agreement with Mr. Ublansky that there would be "significantly less" traffic from his development is puzzling.

Owner's revised proposal

1. Mr. Ublansky has altered the roofline of the attached townhomes because finally he was convinced it had the same appearance as Windsor's Little River Acres (Villages of Riverside), with the same negative connotations. However, while the roofline change is welcome, Mr. Ublansky's overly dense, less than appealing design still invites comparisons and, unfortunately, will result in the same negative impacts that Little River Acres currently endures.
2. We note Mr. Ublansky's changes to the stacked townhomes but still must stress that our governing OP for this proposal does NOT allow stacked townhomes. And inexplicably, Mr. Ublansky's planners feel by making these ineligible buildings look more institutional, they will blend right in with predominately one storey homes in the neighbourhood.

Parkland

The school provided approximately 4.07 acres of parkland to the neighbourhood, but that's gone now. Pursuant to the law, Mr. Ublansky has to give a little parkland back to the town. Here it amounts to only 0.3 acres. Mr. Hillman's claim that this 0.3-acre parkland makes up for the prior 4.07 acres we had with the school is hard to understand. And it doesn't matter how many parks he names in adjacent neighbourhoods; the governing OP says our area is supposed to have a certain amount of parkland. Mr. Ublansky's proposal takes most of it away. As with my prior submissions, I refer you to the illuminating parkland analysis prepared by Storey Samways Planning which was submitted for the March, 2021 meeting.

Other documents reviewed

Mr. Ublansky's planners and Mr. Hillman attempt to bolster the application by saying it will fit into the town's yet-to-be-fully-approved new OP. Well, that's not the governing document and it has no relevance. They also insist that the current institutional guidelines for community facilities offer some direction, but as pointed out previously, that too, is simply smoke and mirrors. The governing document is the OP in effect at the time Mr. Ublansky submitted his application. And, by those rules, his proposal doesn't work.

Conclusion

I think it is very telling that with all the documents reviewed by Mr. Hillman and his colleagues, they never once asked for street view drawings of the proposal without the distortion of a wide-angle view which makes everything look so much more spacious. Mr. Ublansky has never shown just how crowded the property will be if the 63 units, the large parking structure and surface parking are built. Why is that? When I asked Mr. Ublansky's planner for better drawings without the wide-angle perspective, he just laughed.

Mr. Ublansky's proposal is not right for this neighbourhood and not right for our Town. It is too crowded, resulting in a lack of privacy and personal space. People may move in, but then, soon tired of cramped walk-ups, they will move out. It will become a teeming enclave of temporary inhabitants without a sense of permanence and no pride of place. This type of development doesn't lend itself to stability and residential stability is one of the factors associated with lower crime rates. Without that, the opposite is true.

Mr. Ublansky's development sets a dangerous precedent from which no neighbourhood in this town will escape. The insidious creeping effect of lowered property values from the negative impact of this ill-advised application will soon affect all town residents. Mr. McNamara said he wants to protect the tax base... well, protect us from that.

This is NOT the design we need. Please don't turn our neighbourhood into the Tecumseh equivalent of Windsor's Little River Acres which resulted from giving all concessions to the developer. History will judge you by what you decide. Don't be on the wrong side. Please vote NO.