

Mark Lukaniuk

August 28, 2019

Town Council
Tecumseh Town Hall
917 Lesperance Road
Tecumseh, Ontario
N8N 1W9

Re: Briday Former Victoria Public School Rezoning

Dear Mayor McNamara and Council Members:

I am writing to express my strong disapproval of the proposed rezoning of the above named property. I am also opposed to the applicant's plans to construct multi-story buildings on the site. I feel that this will be detrimental to the community and have an adverse effect on the residents of the surrounding neighbourhood.

I live several hundred yards from the former Victoria School property. My parents bought the property where I reside in 1952, the year I was born. I have lived there since a day after my birth, except for a period of five years.

During the sixty-six years that this property has been in my family, I have seen a drastic change to the town of Tecumseh with respect to size and its character. It has gone from a small, quiet and comfortable place to live to a much busier, more crowded and less peaceful locale.

The building of Little River Road and construction of numerous homes on it and Lacasse Boulevard has created a fairly steady stream of traffic, accompanied by noise and sometimes dangerous drivers. Building several dozen new dwellings in this area will bring a substantial deterioration to the quality of life for the present residents of the area.

My neighbourhood consists of well-kept, middle class, single family homes. Many of the people living there have been in these homes for decades. People moved there and continue to live in this area, because they value a more peaceful and safe environment rather than what a big city or busier, more commercial area would offer them.

The proposal to build a development on the Victoria School property, such as the one being proposed, would drastically alter the nature of the neighbourhoods nearby.

Currently, the roads in this area are at capacity. At certain times of the day, there is a heavy stream of cars that drive past my house, some of them do not bother to stop at the posted stop signs. Contrary to what the Traffic Impact Study states, there can be no doubt that the development would create substantially more traffic, noise and pollution, and it would be more pronounced at certain times of the day. This would be detrimental to the health and safety of residents in the area. There is no way that this can be mitigated. My street cannot be widened nor have a boulevard, so there will be considerably more cars driving past our homes. This will pose a danger to children who may be playing in the area as well as create inconvenience for the current residents.

The current residents chose to live on streets that have less traffic than a busy thoroughfare. We should not have to accept the higher traffic volumes that this development would create.

The size of this development will place a large strain on the current sewer and storm systems as well as the utilities which are already over-burdened. It has been many years since these systems were upgraded, and the cost of doing so will place a large demand on the taxpayers.

To illustrate this point, a few months ago, I woke up to find that my water was shut-off, and traffic on St. Pierre St. was being restricted. I walked to the corner of St. Pierre and Dillon Drive and there was water gushing out of the ground as a water main had burst. This was only a hundred yards from the Victoria School site.

Another example of the problems that already exist in the area regarding our systems is that I have had several basement floodings over the years, and little or nothing has been done by the town to remedy this problem. When we receive heavy rains, my backyard becomes almost entirely covered with a pool of water, and I have a large backyard. So you will get my point, I call it Lake Lukaniuk when this occurs.

I have no reason to doubt that the proposed development will make this matter worse, in spite of any claims made by the developers to the contrary. Lake levels are at a high and they can't change that fact.

As I mentioned, I have lived in Tecumseh for a long time and have seen the disappearance of far too much greenspace. Trees and parklands are vital to the physical and mental health and well-being of people. This has been vastly eroded over time. With all of the development going on, our neighbourhood has not seen the preservation of any greenspace or the building of any parks. We have been totally overlooked by the Town Council in this regard, yet our taxes have continued to rise with nothing of this nature to show for it.

The Victoria School property should have been acquired by the Town and turned into a park, but they failed to do so. At the very least, any proposal to develop this site should include the creation/preservation of a substantial area of greenspace! I don't see that in the proposal.

Recently, I drove through the community of LaSalle. That town has grown substantially, just as Tecumseh has expanded. Unlike Tecumseh, their Town Council has ensured that a great deal of the natural beauty has been preserved.

Aside from the former Lakewood Golf Course, the Tecumseh Town Council seems to have been mainly concerned with commercial development and promoting the growth of concrete as opposed to greenery. Much more could have been done to enhance the town's greenspace. Having more businesses in town has not frozen or lowered our taxes nor raised the quality of life here. Traffic delays on Tecumseh and Manning Roads slow everyone down considerably.

By ensuring that this development is a reasonable size, Town Council can show the residents of Tecumseh that they are concerned about maintaining some of the more people-friendly aspects of living in a smaller sized community, much of which has been lost already.

The proposed development will lower the property values of the homes for several blocks around. There is no compensation for the residents, as this brings nothing positive to the area. It will negatively affect the quality of life for the residents who have lived and paid taxes there for years and years.

I understand that the developers have certain rights in this matter and that includes making a decent profit from their investment. I have no objection to them doing so, however this must not negatively affect my property value and, even more importantly, our quality of life. If it comes down to the developers maximizing their profits at the expense of the current residents, then town council should take whatever steps they can to prevent this from happening.

The proposed development represents a dramatic change to the character of this long-established, single-family, single/double storey residential neighbourhood. This is illustrated by the fact that the official town plan and zoning will have to be amended and a new category created along with new zoning regulations to accommodate this project! This is completely unfair to the current residents who never envisioned that this would happen when they bought their properties. Changing the zoning of a neighbourhood to this extent should not be done without the approval of the residents who are going to be affected by it the most.

I feel that most of the residents in this area would not object to a reasonably sized development without a multi-story apartment building or buildings. Such a building is out of place and should not be built in our neighbourhood.

A few months ago,, I spoke with several members of town council including the mayor and the councillor for my ward. I voiced my concerns at that time. I was told that the town wanted to promote the settlement of seniors in the town and create dwelling spaces for them.

I do not believe that very many seniors would prefer to live in a multi-storey building. There is no guarantee that seniors would move into this development. If seniors do choose to move there, there is no guarantee that they will be people who currently live in Tecumseh.

Tecumseh Town Council has a responsibility to the people who are currently living in the town and supporting it. They do not have any responsibility to provide housing for people who may come from some other municipality. The conscience of the town's councillors should be focused on us, the residents of this area, and not on people who presently are unknown, and who may never have lived in Tecumseh nor paid taxes here.

Based on the way this development appears on paper, it is quite possible that it will attract a grade of people who will not live up to the standards of the neighbourhood where residents take a great deal of pride in their homes and ensure that they are well-maintained. We are all well-aware of developments that have been built in the east-Windsor-Riverdale Road area that have turned into dilapidated eyesores. We do not welcome this in our area!

The role of town council as stated in "The Ontario Municipal Councillor's Guide 2018 is "to represent the public and interests of the municipality".

The public, in this instance, consists primarily of the residents of the area surrounding the former Victoria School Property. I believe that you have heard and will hear that these residents strongly oppose the development, as it is currently rendered.

I assert that it is the obligation of the town council to put the interests of the taxpaying residents in the vicinity of the development ahead of those of people who do not reside in the town. More specifically,

the residents of the area that will be affected, if this proposal is passed, should be the main consideration of the Mayor and Councillors and our opinion should carry the most weight in this matter.

I ask members of Council to honestly ask themselves, if they would want to move into a house that is across the street from this development or bordering on it and raise their children there. I Think Not!

Please feel free to contact me. My phone number is [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Mark Lukaniuk