

Cambridge City Council October 19, 2021

Re: Items 7.3.1 (Galt Height Study) and 7.3.4 (Development Application at 130 Water St)

It is with a crushing sense of defeat that I write this letter. Council recently has shown ample evidence that it cares nothing for the opinions of the local citizens of Cambridge who have either lived here all their lives, or who have relocated here after deciding that they will enjoy living in a city that still has the charm of a true home town. So though I know contacting Council is essentially a waste of time (and I write this with all due respect, Mayor McGarry), I believe that I should register a public plea for Council to reconsider their plans for high rise developments in this community.

I am puzzled that Council discounts the opinions of citizens and community groups, while apparently the taking the proposals of developers as gospel. What makes this acceptance so strange is that their proposals are not linked to recent research on building sustainable cities or creating liveable urban areas. When considering these proposals, Council and City staff readily throw away all the official plans and protection designations that were entered into after considerable planning and deliberation.

Sadly, we have come to expect this type of action from our political leaders, but one would hope that Development Department staff might be keeping an eye on those existing plans and encouraging appropriate development options rather than badly proportioned mega high rises. But a bit of background checking shows that many City staff members have had extensive experience working within the private development sector. (This is not unusual within Southern Ontario. One GTA local planner, based on his web profile, appeared to have a consultancy side gig which assisted developers drafting pitches to municipalities).

The proposals that are being considered tonight will have significant negative outcomes on water conservation, heritage retention and climate change mitigation. Any jobs that might be created, and it is not proven that long term employment will naturally follow this construction, will be 20th century construction and service industry jobs.

I would encourage Cambridge Council to step back and look for more information from people *outside* this entanglement of Local and Provincial politicians, municipal employees and developers. There are many academic sources as well as city officials in other jurisdictions who have taken a different approach to building a smart 21st Century city. Let's act locally to begin tackling the Global challenges that we are facing. Let's not just create a larger, taller but with a lot more glass version of the unfettered building surge during the 1960s.

Thank you for your time.

Jill Marks