



February 2, 2022

Mr. Stephen Johnson
Chairman Truro Planning Advisory Committee
695 Prince Street, Truro, NS
B2N 1G5

RE: Clarity on development guidelines encouraged

Dear Mr. Stephen Johnson,

The Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce has a great interest in supporting developers to increase the number of available housing units in our region. During the January 31, 2022 Truro Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting, we were pleased to see the number of applications under review by the committee. It's encouraging to see the interest that Truro is currently receiving by developers. The variety and creative projects that are being proposed will make a welcome addition to the town.

In recent months, the Chamber of Commerce has conveyed the need for housing of all sizes and rental rates. While several projects have been approved, there remains a critical shortage in the area that has held back many employers in filling their labour needs and the community from overcoming its doctor and health professional needs.

We were most interested in the review of the two applications for development on Golf Street and James Street. The proposals are both at Stage 2 of the review process and share many common traits including size and height of the development; percentage of lot coverage; proximity to residential neighbours; conformity to existing land use; and number of parking spaces per unit proposed. However, there appeared to be a glaring difference is how the PAC weighed the importance of these factors in offering feedback to the developers.

Members of the PAC stressed a greater importance on the number of parking spaces and the impact of the scale of the development for the Golf Street proposal over the James Street proposal despite articulating any clearly discernible reason. During the discussion, it appeared that some of the members of the PAC were not in favour of the Golf Street proposal at this early stage, based on their comments expressing opinions about the project in relation to their personal views of bulk and scale and parking ratios. This bias is concerning as future developers look to invest in the region. We feel it is imperative to have clear guidelines set out to provide constructive feedback to developers based on the specified requirements, rather than individual interpretation or opinion.

We've stated in the past how impressed and confident we are with the town staff in guiding developers, the PAC and council through the development process. We believe the role of the PAC can be improved. So much of the feedback to the developers is concentrated on the



opinions of three councillors, who make up 50 per cent of the vote during the public hearing, rather than clear, concise guidelines for developers to use in their plan formulation.

Developers must incur an enormous cost at each step of the application process. We understand the importance of making sure a development is compatible with the town and its surroundings, but we also understand the economics of new buildings added to the town's housing inventory. We encourage the PAC and town staff to work together on clarifying development requirements so the application process can be improved for both the developers and PAC members.

Respectfully yours,

Matthew Mossman
President
Truro and Colchester Chamber of Commerce

CC: Mike Dolter, CAO Town of Truro
Mayor Bill Mills