THE NOTL Cocal

Council rejects staff recommendations for King Street

Kris Dube The Local Local Journalism **Initiative Reporter**

Niagara-on-the-Lake town council has determined the position it will take at an upcoming Ontario Land Tribunal hearing regarding a three-storey residential development on King Street — it is turning down the recommendations of staff, and will argue that the property should remain under its current designation for low- ly been discussed at several density housing.

That density does not allow for a 17-unit apartment but the majority of Wednes-

opposition from neighbours. The discussion was held at

a special meeting on Wednesday evening, with council first hearing set to begin Feb. 28. discussing the proposal in closed session before hearing from seven members of the public who voiced their concerns over the project.

Legal counsel and planners representing developer meeting.

This project has previousclosed-door sessions, much to the chagrin of residents,



Sandra O'Connor made a motion to disregard staff recommendations to permit a three-storey apartment building on King Street and the majority of councillors agreed. (Kris Dube)



building, a local developer's day's agenda was in the open, Planning Solutions said the on how emergency vehicles it being needed for the town proposal which drew strong where councillors explained their stance on what they would like the town to argue at the three-day tribunal

In late October, Bice filed an appeal to the tribunal, saying council had not made decisions on the application within the time period outlined in the Planning Act, which is 120 days since the Josh Bice also spoke at the Official Plan and zoning bylaw amendment applications.

> A motion was put on the table by Coun. Sandra O'Connor Wednesday that ahead of the tribunal process, the town "not redesignate" the property as the developer had requested, asking for zoning bylaw and Official Plan amendments, and that the town hire an outside planthe tribunal.

> "I do not feel it follows our Official Plan," said O'Connor, reiterating an argument made by a number of the residents who stepped up to the podium earlier in the special meeting.

She also said the development "doesn't fit with the neighbourhood," and that she has issues with parking and access.

Earlier in the meeting, Aaron Butler from NPG

project should be seen as a will access the site, considerway for the town to achieve ing a narrow laneway is being provincially-mandated targets related to housing intensification.

O'Connor said the municipality is already on its way to hitting its mark and she believes this project doesn't need to be part of that equation.

'We will not do it at the ex- or not, the staff planning repense of our heritage," she said, referring to the building being pitched in the Old Town, on King Street south of Cottage Street.

Coun. Wendy Cheropita parameters," she said, "but I agreed with O'Connor, saying the project is incompatible with its surroundings. "I think this is really the wrong ments that support residents area for it," she said.

Planning director Kirsten ers' money to hire an outside ner to support this position at McCauley explained that a planner along with lawyers to decision on this matter will be fight this at the OLT." up to the tribunal and that the purpose of the report before Gary Burroughs, Wendy council Wednesday was to choose what argument legal counsel would be presenting vour of her motion against during that process. tions. Couns. Nick Ruller and

Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa, before voting against O'Con- Erwin Wiens were not at the nor's motion, admitted he has meeting. concerns about drainage and water related to the project, but that he was hoping for a "more robust conversation" before council swiftly endorsed O'Connor's motion.

He said moving ahead building which could be apwith O'Connor's recommendation is "telling a group of cupants. people what they want to hear," and that critics of the project may be disappointed ing choice and housing mix," when and if the tribunal rules he said. in favour of the development.

Coun. Adriana Vizzari was the only other vote places in town where this deagainst O'Connor's motion. velopment would be better She asked staff to comment suited, and that he doesn't see



to meet growth requirements. "We don't have any issue with meeting any provincial targets assigned to us," he said.

proposed as the main corri-

dor to the building, and was

told by McCauley that the fire

department has no concerns,

and that those details will also

Vizzari told The Local she

believes, "whether we like it

port is in line with current

provincial legislation. I look

forward to having more con-

versations to achieve what is

do not believe this motion ac-

complishes that. I would rath-

er work hard to make amend-

rather than spending taxpay-

Couns. Tim Balasiuk,

Cheropita, Maria Mavridis

and O'Connor voted in fa-

approving staff recommenda-

Butler, the planner repre-

senting the property owner,

told council that the project

offers something not cur-

rently available in town — an

apartment or condo-style

pealing to some potential oc-

provide that additional hous-

said there could be other

"What this project does is

Coun. Gary Burroughs

plan process.

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Why this location? This was a question Burroughs asked Butler, who again reitbe worked on during the site erated it being an "additional" choice for people.

> One recurring argument made by delegates who opposed the project was that the town should follow its own Official Plan and not make adjustments for a developer.

"You have an Official best for our town within our Plan. Please respect it," said Patrick Gedge, who lives on Meritage Lane next door to the proposed apartment. He said council should also be following the position of the town's urban design committee, that the project should be only two storeys high.

> One of the provisions the developer is asking for is that they are not required to create a children's play area. King Street resident Jason Quesnelle said he doesn't know why the rules are being "bent and broken" on this, and that because there are more than 10 units, a playground should be part of the plans.

> Resident David Saunders suggested neighbours would not have been opposed to townhouses or a couple of homes. Council should just simply turn down the proposal, he said, and called the project a "utilitarian rectangular three-storey block" that doesn't fit into the neighbourhood.

> Staff have recommended approving a lot frontage reduction, that a children's play area not be required, and that an ornamental iron fence be permitted, not the wooden one usually required.

The town's committee of adjustment approved a minor variance last October to permit an increase in lot coverage, and three lots were consolidated into one.

The site is currently vacant and consists of 3,248 square metres of property.



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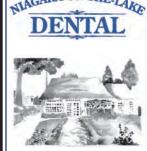
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