

RE: Town of Qualicum Beach Zoning Bylaw No. 900, 2024, Amendment
(673 Fir Street) Bylaw No.900.10, 2026

To the Mayor and Council.

Respectfully

I had the occasion to attend the last Advisory Planning Commission meeting. After an introduction from the Planner, the architect took time to curate a presentation of the proposed new development. Fully half of that presentation comprised views and images of other developments, in other locations, each showing clever and seductive vignettes of portions of other buildings. We are asked to believe these represent the goal for this new development.

It is fair to compare and contrast the ultimate presentation of this proposed development with those images, to see if that lofty goal was achieved. I personally fear not. I found little similarity between the compelling images, of graciously landscaped buildings already built to be in contrast to the rather straightforward and bulky form now proposed; and why are the landscaped areas located on the north side of a five story building?

After the presentation, I listened to all the responses from various members of the APC. It can be said that free advice is worth every penny spent. Perhaps true, but a further hazard to free advice, if it's considered "advice" but is simply opinions; these may not be grounded in the required level of understanding. And there-in lies a potential hazard.

As an evolving town we are guided by several visions:

- 1.) The initial one of course is the developer, whose ultimate object is to make profit. That is their business. Adding another floor is undeniably a money maker.
- 2.) The second branch is the Planning Department, there to confirm compliance with guidelines. Advising on overall form, and opinions on the suitability of the proposed development. Simply put, does the development conform to the guidelines and intent of the ongoing form and character of the Town?
- 3.) The third element are the Mayor and Council. These are elected officials who represent the voters, the townsfolk who chose them to support their desires. The same question is asked. Will the Town be improved by this addition?
- 4.) A fourth element is the APC. This body is considered an outlier that provides an additional level of impartial review to represent the people of this town, about what development could and should happen in this town.

I was frankly dismayed to experience the waffling and wonderment to the most part by individual members of the APC. Ultimately, I feel they merely served as a marketing endorsement for the developer. Whatever was proposed seemed just fine to them.

As a community, we appear to be at the stage where there is consideration for accepting “big box” housing. It is a convenient housing form that starts with a parking structure and simply stacks units above until they hit “refusal”. Four stories, five; how about six? This incompatible scale of form for Qualicum Beach seems now a potential consideration, and may be given endorsement. Simply providing parking seems to be a ludicrous and self-serving formula for added density.

We have the unfortunate opportunity of comparing and contrasting new proposals with the twin towers along East Village. I personally consider their existence an intrusion, entirely incompatible with the scale, character and style that the town has both represented and should continue to be concerned about. Seeing this full scale model of what we should not have in this town, represented by these very “un-village” scale buildings, is a warning note that the town should not be guided by the whims of developers. That the currently named East “Village” could easily be transformed into East “Canyon” seems paradoxical.

The potential combined density for both sides of this street should be a wake-up call to the three governing bodies who are piloting the future of this town.

The developer certainly seems aware of the potential. We should be aware of the hazard.

It would be encouraging to think that the town is in fact guided by Council and Mayor with long-term views, and an APC with an understanding of what their actual roll could and should be.

Yours respectfully,
Malcolm Candler