

DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

Title: 6 Lambe's Lane, Adoption-in-Principle, MPA2000005
Date Prepared: August 31, 2021
Report To: Regular Meeting of Council
Councillor and Role: Councillor Maggie Burton, Planning & Development
Ward: Ward 4

Decision/Direction Required:

That Council adopt-in-principle the resolutions for St. John's Municipal Plan Amendment Number 158, 2021, and St. John's Development Regulations Amendment Number 726, 2021 regarding three proposed apartment buildings at 6 Lambe's Lane.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

The City has received an application from Werkliv for three 6-storey Apartment Buildings that will contain a total of 205 student residential units. The property is zoned Institutional (INST), in which an apartment building is not a listed use. The applicant has asked that the property be rezoned to Apartment High Density (A3), where apartment building is a permitted use. A Municipal Plan amendment would be required. The house on the site will be demolished should the application proceed.

At its regular meeting of August 17, 2020, Council decided to consider the amendment and set the terms of reference for a land-use assessment report (LUAR). The City received the report and held a virtual public meeting chaired by an independent facilitator on August 10, 2021. The meeting and proposed amendments were advertised three times in *The Telegram* newspaper and posted on the City's website. Property owners within 150 metres of the application site were notified. Minutes from the meeting and submissions received are attached for Council's review.

Werkliv seeks to develop a residential project that caters to the university student population. They state that there is high demand for quality living arrangements for 2nd and 3rd year students and that affordable furnished rentals close to campus may be hard to find.

The subject property is 2.27 acres (9,194 square metres) and surrounded by institutional buildings and uses accessory to Memorial University. The property abuts the Aquarena and St. Augustine's Church to the east, and Memorial's alumni engagement office and other university facilities to the south and west. The CBC TV and Radio building and a university parking lot are situated north of the property, with St. Andrew's Elementary School, Prince of Wales Collegiate and St. James United Church to the west.

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The proposed development includes three 6-storey apartment buildings that will have 205 units, including 22 barrier-free units. The units contain between 1 and 5 beds per unit for a total of 656 beds. The applicant is requesting parking relief of almost all parking requirements. They have proposed 4 parking spaces in total, including 3 accessible spaces. WerkLiv believes that housing students so close to campus will relieve the need to own a car, reduce students' costs and increase their quality of life. Having housing located so that students can walk to class will lighten the parking burden of the area by removing the need for more parking spaces. The developer advocates for changing driving behavior through design, placemaking and management, so as to reduce human impacts on the environment.

City Development and Engineering staff have reviewed the LUAR and support exempting the development from parking requirements. The City's Parking Enforcement Division is concerned that residents or visitors to the site may park illegally nearby. This becomes an enforcement issue.

The applicant was required to demonstrate bicycle parking spaces (102 spaces, including 22 covered ones) as well as indoor bike storage, plus parking spaces for taxi/car share and a designated pick-up/drop-off area. The applicant is exploring collaborations with local markets, grocers, and farms to organize potential food delivery and other service plans. The site is within a 3-minute walk to 4 bus stops, and well as others a little further away. Upgrades to Lambe's Lane will be a requirement of the development, and any additional upgrades to the transportation system would be evaluated at the development stage.

While some written submissions and attendees at the public meeting supported the development, others raised concerns, mostly about traffic and parking.

- Some submissions noted that improvements are needed for pedestrian safety. The applicant will be required to upgrade Lambe's Lane to include sidewalks on both sides of the road. Upgrades to Westerland Road were not identified at this stage.
- St. Augustine's Church and MUN alumni office on Lambe's Lane raised concerns that the turn-around bulb at the site would create confusion. The bulb has been reviewed by the City's Roads and Traffic Divisions and no concerns were raised. The entrances to these existing properties from Lambe's Lane will remain open.
- Most meeting attendees felt that parking will be a major issue and that the applicant is underestimating the demand for parking. This is a new type of development for St. John's and the concerns of citizens are valid. However, the City has proposed initiatives over the past two years that promote this type of development. Council declared a Climate Emergency on November 4, 2019, re-enforcing its ongoing commitment to be a sustainable city. On November 23, 2020, Council adopted a target for sustainable modes of transportation (walking, cycling, and transit) to be implemented through policy changes and investment; the target is 16% mode share by 2030 and 22% by 2050. The Lambe's Lane application proposes to provide an option for students who would normally live further away from campus and likely own a vehicle, to live next to campus so that they don't need a vehicle. WerkLiv will not require tenants to sign an agreement regarding vehicle-ownership, but they will promote their apartments as being "no-car" and it will be made clear to prospective tenants that parking is not available at the site.

- Concerns were raised about emergency access. The buildings are proposed to be sprinklered. The applicant will be required to design the buildings and surroundings to all required building and fire codes. A Fire Safety Plan will be developed for the property as per with Section 2.8 of the National Fire Code of Canada.
- The applicant has advised that they have been in contact with the NL Historic Trust and intend to document the existing house at 6 Lambe's Lane before demolition. The City does not have any heritage concerns with the proposed development. The house is not recommended for heritage designation.
- There were concerns that a private developer will not follow City regulations or by-laws. Any applicant is required to meet all City regulations and follow any applicable by-laws following development.

City staff understand the concerns about parking because this is a new type of development locally. We believe that this can be successful. The applicant has developed similar buildings in Montreal and Halifax. After the public meeting, the applicant stated that they stand by the project as proposed but are open to discussions about parking adjustments after the first phase is built, should discussions be needed.

Under the current Development Regulations, the development would require 257 parking spaces. The Envision Development Regulations require 239 spaces. Parking relief requires Council's approval, and this will be brought back to Council at the future time along with adoption of the LUAR, should the amendment proceed. Also, a side yard variance is required, which would be brought back to Council later. The apartment buildings are designed to meet the standards in the Envision Development Regulations which will come into effect in due course. Should the Envision St. John's documents be delayed, staff would propose text changes to the current A3 Zone. For now, Council need only consider the attached amendments.

If the attached amendments are adopted-in-principle, they will be referred to the NL Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs with a request for provincial review in accordance with the Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000. Once the amendments are released by the Province, they will be brought back to Council for consideration of adoption. Should Council adopt the amendments then, a commissioner's public hearing would be organized.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications: Not applicable.
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders: Neighbouring residents and property owners.
3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans:
St. John's Strategic Plan 2019-2029 - A Sustainable City – Plan for land use and preserve and enhance the natural and built environment where we live.
4. Legal or Policy Implications: Map amendments to the Municipal Plan and Development Regulations are required.

5. Privacy Implications: Not applicable.
6. Engagement and Communications Considerations: The LUAR was referred to a public meeting, duly advertised. Should the amendment proceed, a public hearing would be required later.
7. Human Resource Implications: Not applicable
8. Procurement Implications: Not applicable.
9. Information Technology Implications: Not applicable.
10. Other Implications: Not applicable.

Recommendation:

That Council adopt-in-principle the resolutions for St. John's Municipal Plan Amendment 158, 2021 and St. John's Development Regulations Amendment 726, 2020, regarding proposed apartment buildings at 6 Lambe's Lane.

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Approved by: Ken O'Brien, MCIP, Chief Municipal Planner

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	6 Lambe's Lane, Adoption-in-Principle, MPA2000005.docx
Attachments:	- 6 Lambe's Lane - AIP Attachments.pdf - LUAR_6 Lambes Lane_v3 (1).pdf - Public Meeting Notes - 6 Lambe's Lane.docx - Redacted Submissions - 6 Lambe's Lane.pdf - Werkliv_PC_Final.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Sep 2, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Ken O'Brien - Sep 1, 2021 - 10:27 AM

Jason Sinyard - Sep 2, 2021 - 4:01 PM