

**Public Meeting – 1 Clift's Baird Cove**  
**Wednesday, December 11, 2019**  
**Foran Greene Room, City Hall**

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**Present:**     **Facilitator**  
Marie Ryan

**City of St. John's**

Ken O'Brien, Chief Municipal Planner  
Ann Marie Cashin – Planner III – Urban Design & Heritage  
Maureen Harvey, Legislative Assistant

**Proponents**

Michael Novac, Sonco  
Anthony Novac, Sonco  
Christopher Hickman, Marco  
John Hearn, JHA  
Alex Josephson, Partisans

There were approximately twenty people in attendance.

Residents in attendance included:

- |                         |                                       |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Sarah Parker Charles | Carvel & Helm Design Group            |
| 2. Nancy Shepherd Bragg | Carvel & Helm Design Group            |
| 3. Geralyn Christmas    | Resident                              |
| 4. Drew Paddon          | Resident                              |
| 5. Kim Paddon           | Resident                              |
| 6. Paul Dean            | Citizen                               |
| 7. Kerry Shears         | Natural Boutique                      |
| 8. David Cumming        | 22 Flavin Street                      |
| 9. Daunt Lee            | 111 Carter's Hill                     |
| 10. Justin Hall         | 127 Gower Street                      |
| 11. Tom Jackman         | 14 Queen's Road                       |
| 12. Jonny Hodder        | CBC News                              |
| 13. Steven Gardiner     | 18 Allan Square                       |
| 14. Lorne Loder         | Boca Tapas Bar                        |
| 15. John Morris         | 3 Riverview Avenue                    |
| 16. Gavin Baird         | Bond Street                           |
| 17. Colin Baird         | Baird's Cove                          |
| 18. Peg Norman          | Commercial Chambers 197-199 Water St. |
| 19. Chris Shortall      | 55 Long's Hill                        |
| 20. Steve Flynn         |                                       |

## **CALL TO ORDER AND BACKGROUND PRESENTATIONS**

Facilitator Marie Ryan introduced herself and the head table. She advised she was present to facilitate the meeting, and to keep the process efficient, effective and respectful. The Facilitator acknowledged the receipt of multiple written submissions, all of which will be included in this report.

She then invited the City's Planning Officials to speak about the proposed development which was followed by comments from the developer and feedback from the residents in attendance.

## **PURPOSE OF MEETING**

Ann Marie Cashin, City Planner presented the following information.

### **Decision/Direction Required:**

To consider a proposed text amendment to the St. John's Municipal Plan and Development Regulations to allow a maximum height of 12 storeys in the Atlantic Place Parking Garage District and the Atlantic Place Parking Garage Zone in order to accommodate a 12-storey parking garage and hotel at 1 Clift's-Baird's Cove.

The subject property is in a site-specific zone for the Atlantic Place Parking Garage. The current maximum allowable building height in this Zone is 11-storeys. The applicant wishes to build a 4-storey hotel above the existing 8-storey parking garage for a total of 12-storeys and a height of 46.8 metres.

A hotel located on the 9th and/or higher storeys of a building is a Discretionary Use in this Zone.

The 4-storey hotel above the parking garage will include 108 hotel rooms in a variety of sizes, a restaurant with lounge, meeting rooms, a gym and sauna.

In order for this development to proceed, the amendment would include an increase in the maximum building height from 11-storeys to 12-storeys, an increase in the Floor Area Ratio from 2.25 to 2.5 and an amendment to the Downtown Building Control map in the Municipal Plan and Development Regulations to reflect the increase in height. The increase in the Floor Area Ratio would be just a small increase due to the addition of another storey.

The applicants are also proposing a retail or tourist information space at the ground-level. As the uses in this zone are limited, trail and/or office would need to be added as uses.

While this property is located within Planning Area 1 – Downtown, it is not located within the Heritage Area. As such, the policies regarding heritage area standards and designs do not apply to this development.

Council did refer the application to the Built Heritage Experts Panel. While heritage standards don't apply, Council may take the Panel's and the public's comments into consideration prior to making a decision.

The Panel agreed that the design does exactly what the developer intended i.e. to make the building stand out. It was suggested that the use of yellow should be muted in order to not detract from the heritage buildings on Water Street. It was also agreed that any mural/sculpture design on the south side should be meaningful and not appear as a billboard for advertisements etc. and should not include illumination. Any proposed art installation should be determined prior to development approval as the applicant suggested that it could influence the use of colour in the final design. The Panel is appreciative of the pedestrian improvements on the ground level.

There are portions of the hotel which are proposed to extend over the sidewalk along Harbour Drive and Clift's-Baird's Cove. If this design proceeds, any encroachment over City owned land will require Council's approval and a lease of air rights from the City's Legal Department.

This zone requires that 670 parking spaces be maintained for public use. The initial decision note that went to Council regarding this application spoke about the need for an amendment to this section. However, since that time Council has amended the Development Regulations to allow parking relief downtown.

Therefore, if this application proceeds, there will be 703 available parking spaces, leaving 33 in addition to the 670 that need to be maintained. The proposed development requires 54 spaces and so the applicants are requesting parking relief of 21 spaces. That is the general overview of the policy changes that are required should this application proceed.

## **PRESENTATION BY THE DEVELOPER**

Chris Hickman introduced the partners for this proposed development. John Hearn, architect, spoke to the 3 specific reasons for this public meeting.

- a. While there is no restriction on the height of the proposed building an amendment is required to increase the number of storeys from 11 to 12. While

an increased height is permitted, the developer proposes the new building be no higher than Atlantic Place.

- b. Floor area ratio – request is for a modest adjustment.
- c. Addition of small retail/tourism space to make it more pedestrian friendly.

## DISCUSSION FROM THE FLOOR

This report highlights the points made without reference to the person responsible for making them.

The following is a summary of the positions put forward by those who spoke at the meeting:

Unfavorable Comments	Favorable Comments
	Resident asserts this is a very good proposal and a welcomed addition to the downtown
	Overall a great idea to renovate an existing derelict building.
The color scheme (red and yellow) is not appealing.	Developer wants the development to be unique and eye-catching
Should not be replacing one eyesore with another.	Developer suggests the proposed development will greatly improve the look of the parking garage.
Contrary to the developer's assertion, the building does nothing to contribute to the cultural theme of the City. The proposed development detracts from the character of the downtown. Suggests the developer is not being up front.	Developer asserts the building will complement the cultural scene of the downtown.
Developer is attempting to circumvent the issue of height by insisting the height of the proposed development is in keeping with the regulations and that it is an increase in the number of storeys. This is a misguided notion.	Developer indicated the City's regulations have no restriction on height and only on the number of storeys. Although the building height will be equitable to the Atlantic Place Building, there is a requirement to request an increase in the number of storeys from 11 to 12. In fact, the building could be higher and still meet regulations.
With the limited amount of space proposed for retail (1,400 square feet), any proposed rent will likely be unrealistic for potential tenants.	Developer indicated that further consideration needs to be given to the retail space as its provision had been added to the proposal in the latter stages at the request of the City.

Concern with the timing of this meeting given the Christmas season. Was not well publicized and consequently a true representation of feedback from the public is not possible. The absence of Council representation at the meeting is telling.	
City doesn't need more hotels. The Province's occupancy rate in hotels is at 55%. Doesn't make good economic sense. Shadow lines affect the Baird building. There is no need for an amendment to the height. There is no illustration to identify the impact of light on other surrounding properties	Developer asserts the proposal of 108 hotel rooms represents 3% of those in the City and should not have a major impact on occupancy rates. It is hoped that this development will attract more people to the City.
Major concern is the overhang on the building on Bairds Cove and how it will impact wind, shadows and glare for nearby businesses.	
Coupled with the "Big Dig" that is happening on Water Street in 2020, there will be further disruption for access to existing businesses if the development receives approval.	
The proposed screening of Atlantic Place Garage is vague with no illustration of where a similar type of material was used in another port city. Resident would like to see other projects where rusting in a salt-air ocean environment is possible.	Developer suggested there is a similar screening in Halifax and Santa Monica.
	Resident stresses the need to bring more people to the City. Has no issue with hotel numbers and feels that any design adjustments can be worked out. Likes the idea of harbor front retail and if additional space is identified, even if it has a shallower ceiling level, it will add to the cultural fabric of downtown. The City needs downtown density. Need to move away from the NIMBY concept. Should not be shutting the door on this project.
	Resident (nearby business owner) is in favor of the project and thankful that majority of the parking spaces will be retained for public use. Developer will ensure the back alley which is

	currently being used for the benefit of nearby businesses is retained mainly because the screening will not wrap the building in that area.
Resident believes that cutting off any view of the harbor should not be considered. Believes that the City needs to retain its downtown character being the oldest City in North America. Citizens should collaborate and request a moratorium on all tall buildings in the downtown.	
	Business owner admires the ambition of the developer and hopes the development is approved and a success. Design is subjective and commends John Hearn and Partisans for the unique design.
The building is similar to the ALT Hotel. If Atlantic Place was a mistake, as has been suggested, then adding to it will be a further mistake. The proposed design is too boxy and lacks innovation. Make it spectacular and not just another box. Adding extra floors prohibits the view of the Cathedral and Courthouse.	

#### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

It was noted that once the report of this meeting is prepared and combined with written submissions, the matter will be referred to Council at a regular meeting in January 2020.

The Chair thanked everyone in attendance for their comments and respect in delivering them.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned 8:25 pm.

Marie Ryan  
Chairperson/Facilitator