

Subject: Secondary Dwelling Units: What We Heard**Recommendation:**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report #2021-0096 – Second Dwelling Units: What We Heard, for information.

Background

The Town continues to update planning policies and regulations to permit Second Dwelling Units (SDUs) within the Town of Pelham, this report is to provide a summary of “What We Heard?” to date and the next steps. Following the public meeting on February 8th, 2021, the Engaging Pelham website was launched to provide the public and various stakeholders with information pertaining to the proposed policy direction. The project specific webpage (<https://engagingpelham.ca/second-dwelling-units>) was the main source of information available to the public that included the presentation from the February public meeting, information detailing “What’s happening with Second Dwelling Unit(s) in Pelham?” as well as copies of the Draft Official Plan Amendment (OPA) and Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBA).

The website included a survey consisting of seven (7) questions that was released for public input beginning on February 17th, 2021 to May 2nd, 2021. The complete results of the survey have been included as Appendix A to this report and a summary of the outcome of the survey and comments are provided in the body of this report. At the time that this report was prepared, twenty (20) members of the public visited the survey section of the webpage and there were sixteen (16) participants. Further to the survey, Staff fielded several additional inquiries and comments having been received by way of email or telephone.

In addition to the comments collected from the public, the Region of Niagara has provided comments on the draft OPA and ZBA that were presented to Council and the public in February. These comments have been included as Appendix B to this report. As the project moves towards completion, staff will revise the proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments in consideration of the comments received from the Region, the public and Council feedback. Staff are proposing to hold a second Public Meeting on June 14th, 2021, to inform the public of the proposed

changes that are being considered with respect to the revised draft OPA and ZBA and to receive additional community and Council feedback on the proposed revisions.

What We Heard

The findings of the survey and comments received have assisted staff in addressing questions regarding establishing a SDU on a property. The most frequently asked questions and inquiries were about the size and type of unit, servicing requirements of those located outside the urban areas and the location of units on the property in proximity to the principal dwelling unit.

The demographics of those who visited the project webpage and contributed to the survey were broken down by postal codes as follows:

- Fonthill – 16.7%
- Ridgeville – 16.7%
- Fenwick – 66.7%

This break down helps illustrate the level of interest based on location and the majority of comments received were from the Agricultural and Rural zoned areas of the Town. The sixteen (16) survey responses are appended to this report in Appendix A and out of the sixteen (16) surveys completed, 25% of the participants do not support a SDU as a means of providing housing choice and housing affordability in the community. An overwhelming 75% of participants support SDUs and are eagerly awaiting the permission to establish an SDU on their property for creating intergenerational housing.

When asked what type of SDU appeals to them, most respondents interested in a SDU chose a basement apartment or expressed interest in building a detached accessory building. Following closely behind the other two preferred types are putting an addition onto an existing or proposed garage and building a loft above. The type that received the least interest was retrofitting/renovating and prefabricated modular homes.

In addition to the information received from the survey, many questions from property owners located outside the urban areas were in regards to the permitted size of a SDU in an agricultural and rural area. The draft ZBA limits the maximum size of these units to 65m² (700sqft) in both Urban and Agricultural/Rural zones. The proposed increase to unit size in these areas was discussed with the Region and their response to this increase can be found in the comments in Appendix B.

Furthermore, a substantial amount of questions were presented to staff in regards to the proximity of the SDU to the principal dwelling on agricultural/rural property. In the draft ZBA presented at the February meeting, staff proposed a maximum distance between the principal dwelling and a SDU be 40m (131.2 ft) where the SDU is a new

construction. This requirement along with the Section B2.1.3.5 (c) of the OPA will not allow a severance from the original parcel that contains the principal dwelling on which the SDU is constructed. Staff analyzed the distance between existing accessory structures and the principal dwelling on the property and as a result the average separation distance is approximately 40 m (131.2 ft), therefore this requirement is considered to be reasonable and maintains the intent of other agricultural policies which are aimed at minimizing the amount of agricultural land removed from agricultural production and minimizing impacts on the agricultural operation or nearby operations.

Next Steps

The proposed Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment will be revised based on the feedback received from the public, Council, and agency comments. The revised amendments will be presented at a further Public Meeting on June 14th, 2021 for further feedback and input. Following the second Public Meeting, a recommendation report will be prepared and presented to Council for consideration at a later date.

Attachments

Appendix A – Second Dwelling Unit Survey Responses

Appendix B – Niagara Region Comments

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