

July 22, 2024

RE: File Number B14-2024P

I am writing to provide comments on the above-mentioned file regarding the partial discharge of mortgage and consent to convey 420.82 square metres of land for future construction of a single detached dwelling. [REDACTED]. For ease of reference, I have divided my comments into three sections based on my specific concerns.

Flooding:

My main concern with the proposal is the potential to increase flooding in the area. The house at 28 Lorimer was very recently extensively excavated in order to address a flooding problem in the existing home. For those who may not be aware of the Town's Backflow Prevention Program, in October of 2014, backflow valves we subsidized by the town in homes north of Hurricane on Lorimer. The property in question is on the south corner of Lorimer and Hurricane. The property under consideration for conveyance in this proposal is adjacent to the area subsidized as identified for potential flooding.

The house at 4 Hurricane Road has recently been struggling with basement flooding as well. The sump pump at that location runs nonstop around the clock. My property and the property in question for this proposal lie in between the existing home at 28 Lorimer and 4 Hurricane Road. Covering the majority of the property at 28 Lorimer with a driveway, garage and home will no doubt exacerbate the flooding problem in the area. The sewers on Hurricane Road between Lorimer and Pelham Street have been replaced three times within the past five years. The storm sewers that run down Chestnut Street ending at Hurricane have similarly been problematic with work being repeatedly done over the past five years. As recently as this year the road caved in at the southwest corner of Chestnut and Hurricane due to excessive storm sewer water. The northwest corner of Chestnut and Hurricane has also required repeated repairs to the storm sewer.

The lot at 28 Lorimer will effectively be able to absorb little (if any) rainfall compared to its current capability as the lot proposed for severance and subsequent building is presently 100% lawn, trees and shrubs. I have personally done a quick count of roughly **50 trees** that will be impacted by the proposal under consideration. Some of these trees show as being undisturbed on the drawings. These are trees that are mature and very tall. The proposed dwelling cannot be built without access to the property by removing these trees. Those not removed will without question die very quickly afterward due to damage to their root systems as is currently happening to the trees at 3 Hurricane following development on that site. Along the west property line there are at several cedar trees that will need to be removed to make room for the proposed building itself. The loss of yard and trees will have a significant impact on the tree canopy in the area, air quality and of course flooding!

No doubt we have all seen the recent photographs of what transpired in Toronto and Burlington neighbourhoods as the result of heavy rainfall. Climate change is real. We know that specific types of housing is needed. I am a strong advocate for creation of places for people to live. We do need to plan responsibly though and develop the Town in a sustainable way – this is indeed a heavy responsibility, but one you have agreed to bear as committee members. Decisions regarding development should always be guided by actual need, both with regard to specific type and price points. A comprehensive plan that targets specific housing need should be followed. In the absence of a comprehensive and targeted plan we cannot hit the desired target. In support of such a comprehensive approach the Town must provide adequate infrastructure to ensure that proper services can and will be provided. Flooding and pooling of water in this area is already of concern.

Housing:

I understand the need for additional housing and the benefits of meeting the provincial targets for housing increases. However, the particular neighbourhood in question is experiencing challenges filling currently vacant and occupied homes for sale, as well as vacant land. The build being proposed is directly across the street from a house at 9 Hurricane Road which has been on the market in excess of 120 days (4 months). The current listing shows 33 days, however there was a 90 day listing with a different realtor prior to the 33 days. It has been a considerable length of time since anyone has been seen touring the house with any interest in purchasing it. During this entire time the house has been vacant. The vacancy is of concern because in the not too distant past the home at 28 Lorimer (the subject of this file) was left vacant for an extended period of time with squatters smashing the window and moving in. Vacant homes are a magnet for crime of various sorts. Pelham has precious few policing resources to deal with such crime.

The home at 31 Lorimer (directly across the street facing 28 Lorimer) is also currently for sale. The listing for this home indicates that as of today it has been on the market for 32 days. This home is currently occupied. Similar to the listing at 9 Hurricane, no house showings or potential buyers have been seen visiting the home. This would seem to support the notion that homes available for sale in the neighborhood in question do not necessarily translate into putting people or families into them.

There are two vacant building lots currently for sale within a block of the property in questions as well. The property located at 1A Hurricane Road is a vacant building lot that has been for sale since October of 2020 with no current potential buyers. Another vacant lot is for sale on the corner of Mayfair and Lorimer (5 Mayfair). To the best of my knowledge there are no current potential buyers for that building lot. The vacant building lot on Mayfair has essentially become neglected and overgrown.

Condominium projects in town have similarly been stalled for several years now with some builders going bankrupt. There are at least three proposed condominium projects within blocks of 28 Lorimer Street (one of highway 20 and two on Pelham Street) that are not progressing and have seen no movement for the past several years. At least two of those projects have become fenced off and neglected.

In addition to the absence of buyers for the aforementioned properties and projects, there are two townhouse condominium communities located at 1599 and 1616 Pelham Street where homes are pretty much always available for sale.

In summary of the housing issue, it seems that the problem is not the lack of available housing in this neighbourhood or within the Town of Pelham. At the April 3, 2023 meeting regarding the development of 26 Chestnut (file number B5/2023P) I suggested that comprehensive plan for development that is sustainable is needed as opposed to considering individual proposals in isolation without planning or direction to guide decision making. This request under consideration is another example of a request being considered as a “one off” without concern for when we hit the infrastructure tipping point. We are in need of real leadership regarding sustainable development that meets clearly identified specific needs of the Town for housing in an environmentally responsible and sustainable way. The infrastructure in this particular area (Hurricane Road and Lorimer Street) is clearly inadequate. How does the Town plan to address the problem? To date is has been a patchwork of digging up sewers and implementing unsuccessful fixes on a regular and frequent basis.

Proposed drawing:

This section will be brief, but it is important to note a few questions I have regarding the drawings provided with the proposal for 28 Lorimer. They are listed below.

- 1) While I am neither a mathematician, nor an engineer my calculations seem to indicate that it would not be possible for a car to make a 90 degree turn from a driveway 3 metres wide into a garage of 5 or 6 metres wide. So let us all be honest about the fact that the owners will be coming back to the Town with an urgent request to remove all remaining trees and shrubs along Hurricane to provide access to the proposed garage directly from Hurricane Road along the entire length of the garage.
- 2) The calculations are lacking, making it impossible to calculate what percentage of the property will be paved and/or covered by a building.
- 3) This is a surprisingly poor drawing having been done by a professional surveyor. There are precious few comments online about them and they have no website. Has the Town considered or verified the accuracy of the survey provided?

In closing I would like to thank the Town and the Committee for the opportunity to provide comments and concerns for consideration. It is my sincere desire to have the Town continue to grow in diversity and to attract and retain new people and families to the community. We do however, need to be responsible in meeting targets in the right way and for the right reasons. Creation of a safe and healthy community with adequate infrastructure should be at the centre of development decisions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

Patricia Tomczyk

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Fonthill (Pelham), Ontario ██████████