

Arthur Street condo development progressing

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GUELPH — It could take several years to build, but the vision of what could ultimately emerge on the former W.C. Wood property at 5 Arthur St. S. is beginning to come together.

Complete applications for a major commercial and residential development have been received by the City of Guelph's planning services department. The application will be discussed at a public meeting on July 8 in council chambers, beginning at 7 p.m.

A proposed official plan amendment allowing a greater range of residential and commercial uses on the land has been submitted to the city, along with a series of 13 reports, studies, assessments and reviews.

Some preliminary concepts were revealed back in March by architectural design firm DTAH, working on behalf of Fusion Homes. Major remediation work on the land was carried out by Kilmer Brownfield Equity. The property along the Speed River now sits vacant aside from a heritage structure that will remain.

The proposal shared by DTAH included two 12- to 14-storey highrises, one at each end — north and south — of the 3.26 hectares property, as well as a series of four-storey townhouses along Arthur Street, and three eight- to 10-storey condos behind the townhouse. The city's Downtown Secondary Plan allows for 14-storey buildings, but nearby residents have advocated for less rather than more height.

The design calls for features that blend with the existing character of the neighbourhood. Those involved in the proposal thus far said Friday they are pleased it has remained a collaborative process throughout.

On Friday, Ward 1 Coun. Jim Furfaro said there have been ongoing meetings between the developer and architect, members of The Ward Residents Association, and council representatives.

"I really am pleased by the collaborative effort that has been put forth by the residents association, by the developer Fusion, and the architect," he said. "This is a massive project. It'll take seven, eight or 10 years to complete."

Each stage of the development, he added, will have its challenges. But he believes the developer is creating a plan that fits well with The Ward and will be well received by residents.

Ward 2 Coun. Ian Findlay said he is confident the 5 Arthur St.S. development will be as successful as Tricar's RiverHouse Condominiums development nearby on Macdonell Street — which is close to sold out — though still just in construction.

Maria Pezzano, chair of the The Ward Residents' Association, said the group will continue to be a part of the conversation around the development and offer input. She believes the project will bring vibrancy to the neighbourhood, and she is pleased with the direction it is going.

"I think there are some aspects of the neighbourhood that will remain the same," she said. "I look forward to it. It's going to make it more vibrant. I think it's going to be more exciting. I think things are going to be happening on that property, especially at the heritage building, that is animated and brings people there."

Pezzano said the developer and the city have been forthright throughout the process about what is needed to make the project both economically viable and viable in terms of the Guelph's downtown development goals.

"We can understand what they need to do, and they understand what we as a neighbourhood are prepared to accept," she said.

"We like what they are doing so far," she said, adding that the concept of a river's edge path, streets entering the development, and new family homes facing existing family homes, are welcome ideas.

Furfaro said the public meeting will be an opportunity to hear public reaction to the proposal. "I'm sure this is only the first step in a number of months of having that final plan for approval being completed thoroughly," he added.

Anyone wishing to address council on the application must register as a delegation by contacting the city clerk's office at city hall no later than 9 a.m. on July 5. To register, telephone (519) 837-5603, fax (519) 763-1269, or email clerk@guelph.ca. Or visit city hall.

