

Council paves way for new Charlottetown apartment building

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Coun. Greg Rivard, left, chairman of Charlottetown's planning committee, went against planning board's recommendation and supported a resolution to give first reading to a bylaw amendment that would pave the way for an 18-unit apartment at 38 Palmers Lane. Coun. Bob Doiron, right, voted against the amendment, saying even though the city is in a housing crisis, development shouldn't be allowed to go ahead at any cost. - Dave Stewart

5-4 vote goes against recommendation of Charlottetown's planning board

CHARLOTTETOWN, P.E.I. — Charlottetown city council is paving the path for an 18-unit apartment building on Palmers Lane.

At last Monday's regular monthly meeting, council voted 5-4 in favour of giving first reading to a bylaw amendment that would rezone 38 Palmers Lane, in the neighbourhood of Parkdale, from R2 to

R3 to make the project possible.

Planning board had recommended council not approve the rezoning request so the initial resolution Monday was to reject the amendment. But that was defeated so council then voted on a resolution to approve the rezoning, and it passed 5-4. Coun. Greg Rivard, chairman of the planning committee, moved the resolution, which was seconded by Coun. Alanna Jankov. They voted in favour of the amendment. Also saying yes were councillors Mike Duffy, Terry Bernard and Kevin Ramsay.

Councillors Bob Doiron, Mitchell Tweel, Jason Coady and Julie McCabe opposed the amendment.

Area residents who attended a public meeting on this subject recently were opposed to the project.

"The determining factor for me was Charlottetown, as everyone knows, is going through a housing crisis," Rivard said on why he went against the recommendation of planning board. "That kind of tipped my meter over to the affordable housing or even (the need) for housing in general."

Residents voiced concern over density, changing the neighbourhood, the fact there is a 12-unit complex adjacent to the vacant lot the 18-unit building is proposed for and the increase in traffic.

"There's 12 units next door and this is going to be bigger than that," Doiron said. "There could be a lot more traffic on the street, and it's a school area and the people are concerned about traffic and the size of the development."

Coun. Bob Doiron

"From (the residents') perspective, they wanted to see something from (an) R2 zone, a duplex of sorts or even a single home be put there. They are concerned about traffic, the speed of traffic, things of that nature."

Tweel, who represents the ward, was visibly upset that council ignored the sentiment of residents and the recommendation from planning board.

"I'm not against development, but I listen to residents," Tweel said. "They want to maintain the integrity of this neighbourhood."

Tweel added there is no sense in holding public meetings if council is simply going to ignore the feelings of residents.

"Congratulations, I hope you can sleep tonight," Tweel said, addressing the rest of council.

Doiron said the building would put a strain on that area of Palmers Lane.

"There's 12 units next door and this is going to be bigger than that," Doiron said. "There could be a lot more traffic on the street, and it's a school area and the people are concerned about traffic and the size of the development."

Doiron agrees there is a housing crisis in Charlottetown but cautions against green-lighting development for the sake of development.

The process still has to go through second reading, which is expected to happen at the October public meeting.

Rivard said the developer has not submitted an application yet, that this is simply a zoning issue right now.

He added that the property would allow for 17 units as-of-right. If the developer decides to go for that one extra unit, it would have to go back to council for a variance.

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