

Port Dover Coun. Adam Veri
& fellow Norfolk councillors

Aug. 12 /2025

Bohdan Wynnyckyj

Director of Planning, Norfolk County

Hello everyone. Hope all at Norfolk County are keeping well. I am writing with regard to development application ZNPL2025173, a proposal to rezone the property at 711 Main Street in Port Dover from Residential R1-A to Residential R-4 to allow for stacked townhouses.

I am the owner of the single-family dwelling at 707 Main St. immediately south of this parcel and have lived on this property for 30 years. I must say I've been mildly surprised that something hasn't been done sooner with 711 Main – a double lot with a single-family dwelling – and have much enjoyed this expanse of private greenspace on the other side of my fence. The neighboring property features a number of mature trees and has always been well-maintained.

In terms of the highest and best use for this property, I think some densification is in order. After all, there is ample room here for another substantial house.

However, there are issues with the proposed stacked townhouse development that council should consider. I also believe there is a better way to densify this property which achieves the objectives of the applicants and possibly even more in terms of aesthetic appeal and bottom-line profitability, but more on that in a bit.

Most everyone on council has been involved in municipal politics long enough to know that developers will ask for the moon, knowing they will have to settle for less. It's a common negotiating tactic to ask for much while keeping a more realistic objective in reserve. Asking for R-4

1.

zoning on a double lot at the gateway entrance to a showcase community like Port Dover in the centre of a large, well-established R-1A zone strikes me as such a gambit. Changing the lot requirement from 195²m (2,100 square feet) to 158²m (1,700 square feet) represents a 19% reduction. Hats off to retailers who extend the seniors discount to all who qualify. But if you do it for everybody you don't have a good head for commerce and you'll soon be out of business, so keep that in mind.

As council members frequently wonder in response to such requests, you have to ask what's the point of deliberating and approving a zoning bylaw if you are just going to erase it and make it say something else because a developer wants you to. This is not fair to people who pay full price for a property with the understanding that the stated zoning bylaw means something and that the municipal council in charge of overseeing it is stable, believes in its decisions, and doesn't backtrack on them on a whim.

My primary concerns with this proposal are environmental. I see it as a great point of departure for our county to start a dialogue about the urban heat-island effect before it is too late and we damage our pretty little towns. Regarding this proposal, consider the size of the parking lot and the great expanse of pavement it represents. In the summer, that lot will gather ultraviolet light by day, get hot and radiate that heat back into the community throughout the night when everybody likes it cool for sleeping.

Combine this with what we have westerly on St. George Street with Lakewood Elementary School, the Todd Eaton Memorial Track, the Port Dover and Area Arena, the skatepark and tennis courts, the Lions Community Centre, the former Port Dover Medical Centre, the No Frills mall and the strip mall across the road from it -- and all associated parking not to mention asphalt roads and streets -- and you see the

potential here to make this part of Port Dover uncomfortable and potentially a health hazard to the elderly and other people vulnerable to heat. Set the precedent with a great expanse of paving as proposed for 711 Main and how can you say no to other developers who want to do the same thing elsewhere on Main Street and, indeed, in any other of our communities where there is an opportunity for infilling?

It's a slippery slope. Like the frog slow-boiled in a pot, you don't know you have a heat-island problem until it's too late. The trick is to never go there in the first place. So many in our cities are miserable because they're immersed in an environment of hot bricks, pavement & asphalt with no protection from the sun. That counts as "climate change" to the extent that city planners have fashioned micro-climates for their citizens but not in a good way. Our descendants will be eternally grateful to a far-sighted council and staff that say – sure – there's room for densification in our communities, but let's not trade the great thing we have in Norfolk for something which, in the end, we regret and causes nothing but problems for people forced to live with the consequences.

Which brings me to the antidote to heat-island impacts, namely the canopy that defines the mature, urban forest we have in this part of Port Dover. How ever this pans out, redevelopment of 711 Main Street will require the removal of several substantial trees on the property and that likely can't be avoided. But as you see in the application, the stacked townhouses back onto my northerly side yard. The zoning bylaw calls for a 7.5-metre rear yard setback but the applicant would like this amended down to 3 metres. This raises questions about the continued good health of two enormous pine trees in my backyard near our mutual side yard fence. (See attached photo).

One pine, with a circumference of 6' 6" at chest level, is entirely on my property while one has edged onto the property line through long years

of growth but remains substantially on my side of the fence. The latter, taller tree has a circumference of 8' 5" at chest level. These pines are towering and provide serious habitat -- stacked townhouses, if you will - - for all manner of birds, squirrels & biodiversity in general. Every summer, I find cicada casings at the base of these trees and – soon after – cicadas are in their branches singing the soundtrack of our Canadian summers.

If this property is to be redeveloped, the standing 7.5-metre setback would provide some buffering to root impacts. Reduced to 3 metres, I can't see how the pines won't suffer. If there has to be redevelopment, I would appreciate the county arborist taking an interest in this construction just like he/she did several years ago when contractors were under instruction to work around trees adjacent to Main Street when it was rebuilt in three phases. If there has to be redevelopment, I would like tree protection in this area written into site-plan control.

As an aside, I noted reference in the Vallee planning report to a "swale" in the side yard beside the garage on 711 Main adjacent to the fence separating our properties. That was news to me. Let's not get carried away: If you want to see a swale, check out the one that was built for stormwater management some years ago on the west side of Cockshutt Road a mile south of Townsend Centre. That's a swale. The only time I've seen ponding along our common property line is during the spring thaw when the ground beneath remains frozen. Even then, it was only minor. Records indicate my house was built around 1865 and – as the oldest home in the neighborhood – was naturally situated on the highest ground for good drainage. I expect this situation to continue as it is illegal to change the grade of a property in a manner that alters natural, traditional drainage patterns. So let's dispense with that right now: My backyard is not a "swale" and never has been.

4.

I also noted a comparison in the Vallee report of the proposed development to the row house development on Alma Street nearby in the former location of Port Dover Public School. The big difference between the two involves the opening of the Alma street allowance where the school used to sit. As such, these row houses front onto the street as one would expect. They don't sit perpendicular to the street like the proposed stacked townhouses would.

As well, the ratio of housing-to-pavement in the Alma development is much higher than the proposal for 711 Main. Most on council will recall the formation of a citizens committee in Port Dover several years ago that was concerned with developers facing the butt end of their housing toward the street, which is then lined with junkyard fencing for backyard privacy. There are ways to maintain the traditional interface of new housing at 711 Main Street with the rest of the community while achieving the developers' objectives.

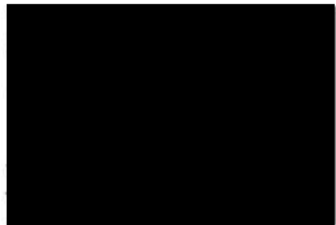
As for next steps, I would suggest the proposed plan doesn't represent the highest and best use of the parcel in question. It certainly doesn't say "Port Dover – Ontario's Summer Garden," which is an excellent, valuable reputation to have, uphold and protect. A giant asphalt parking lot in this location contradicts this branding.

Conversely, I see a real opportunity here for the developers and Norfolk planning staff to work together and do something really great with this property. Densification can make a pleasant, positive contribution to the community if done properly. In this regard, I've always been impressed by the design sensibility of the people at Van el Custom Homes. The Van el Victoria Court development on Victoria Street in Simcoe is a striking example of compact, efficient development that also manages to be charming, liveable and aesthetically pleasing. Van el has done several developments in the local area and elsewhere to the same effect so their

formula for densification is transferable and repeatable. We should learn from it.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Monte Sonnenberg



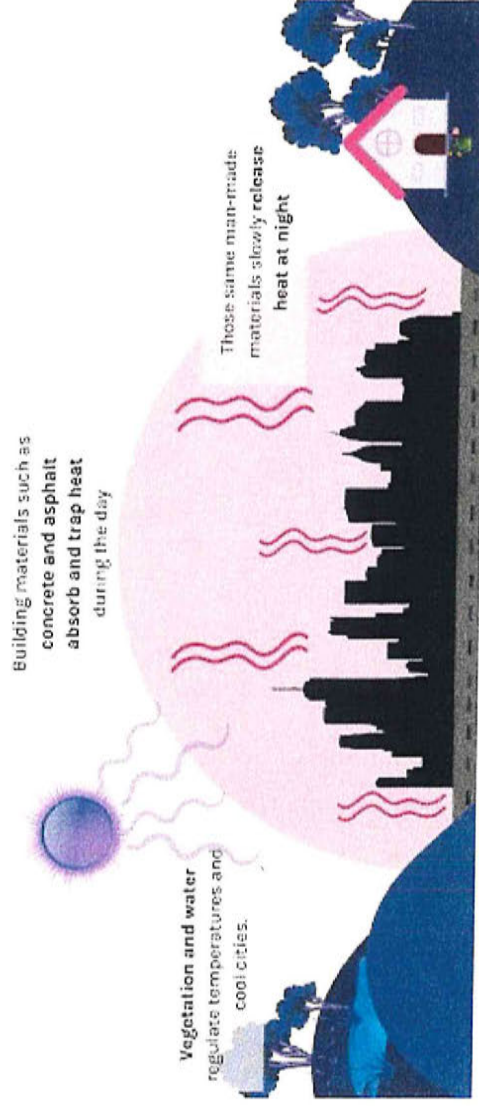
Victoria Court, Simcoe
Two Van el units



1011 pines, wackyaava 101 main st. Fort Power



THE URBAN HEAT ISLAND EFFECT





The urban heat island effect

Graphic: JOHN McCANN
Data source: CSIR

Rural area

vs Urban area

More plant transpiration and water evaporation from soil

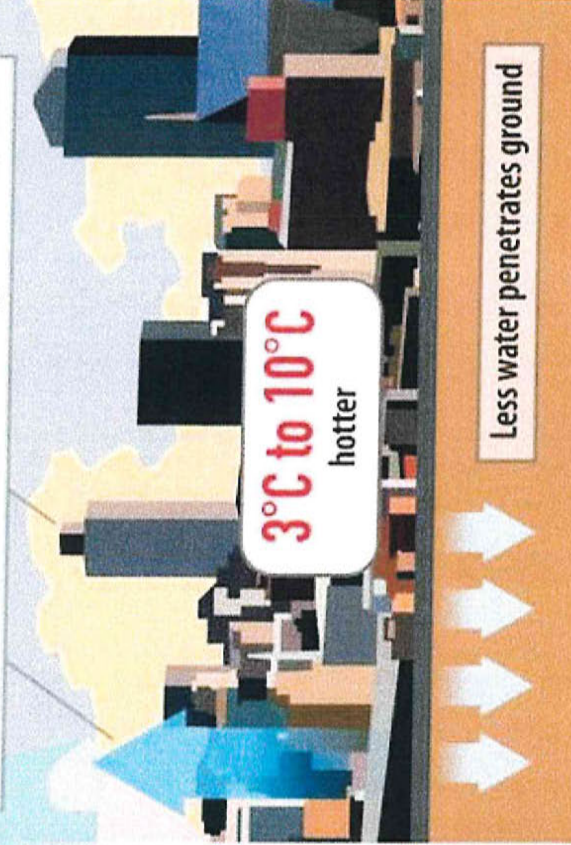
More heat absorption and retention

Less plant transpiration and water evaporation from soil



Less heat absorption and retention

More water penetrates ground



3°C to 10°C
hotter

Less water penetrates ground



HOT PAVEMENT

AIR TEMP

77°

86°

87°

ASPHALT TEMP

125°

135°

143°

**If it's too hot for YOUR bare feet,
then it's too hot for THEIR paws!**



Monte Sonnenberg



Good morning Joshua,

I have a few more questions related to the aforementioned file number (ZNPL2025173) at 711 Main Street in Port Dover, specifically related to the water treatment plant in town since I have found that over the past few years (I've lived here for 7 years) that my water pressure has decreased and has been particularly weak this summer. Not sure if that has to do with the lack of rain, but you mentioned when we spoke on the phone last week that the water/drainage in town was no longer an issue. I live at 705 Main Street and am concerned about water capacity, pressure, draining if 12 more units are added 2 doors up.

1) Has water capacity officially been increased in Port Dover to address the needs of the **existing** households and non-residential properties serviced by the system as well as any developments already approved but not yet built plus industrial, commercial allocations and fire flow reserves etc?

2) What is the total current rated capacity of the Port Dover water treatment plant?

3) What is the average daily demand currently placed on the system?

4) What is the projected household/service capacity based on the 7500 m³/day expansion - and are there any additional upgrades planned?

5) Have any constraints or risks (such as peak demand limitations, infrastructure bottlenecks or climate related considerations) that could affect service reliability or future growth been considered before decisions are made about new build applications?

Thank you in advance for any answers you can provide to me.

Carole Aeschelmann

On Thu, Aug 14, 2025 at 11:18 AM Carole Aeschelmann < > wrote:

Hi Joshua,

I received the Notice of Public Meeting and Complete Application for the property at 711 Main Street in Port Dover. I have a few questions. I own the property at 705 Main Street (corner of Main St and Greenock) a couple of doors down.

My questions so far (I'm sure I'll have more) are:

1) 23 parking spots indicates a lot of units - how many units in the multiplex has the applicant applied for a permit for?

2) what kind of resident will the multiplex/condo building be

for? Owners? Renters? Short term/long term?

3) when is the proposed R4 zoning, if it passes, to come into effect?

4) when will the proposed building project begin and how long is the duration of the project from start to finish? (thinking about noise, dust, more vehicles parked along the road)

5) will the proposed multi unit complex affect access to and from the county fire laneway behind our house?

Thanks in advance and I'll see you on September 3rd.

Carole Aeschelmann

Hi Josh,

I write in response to the zoning bylaw application for a stacked townhome on Main St. in Port Dover. I believe the massing and density proposed is a significant departure from the current character of the neighborhood. I believe that this type of development is better suited for the downtown core of Port Dover, and would be both ill fitting and inappropriate, particularly given the current number of vacant and abandoned properties downtown. Why shoehorn a large development into a block of single family residential when you don't have to? Dragging this type of development into a residential neighbourhood down the street from a

core is the type of sloppy planning that towns often never recover from, and Port Dover would not recover from in our lifetime.

I'm also concerned about the proposed reduced parking and its safety impacts on Main Street given what will obviously result in the need for parking overflow. Port Dover is vehicle dependent, especially with so many tourist attractions. Permanent and temporary residents will no doubt have guests on high traffic weekends. Where will they park?

I strongly urge council to deny this application in favour of an amended proposal that would have reduced

density, appropriate massing and sufficient parking.

Thank you,

Louise Vrebosch

September 1st, 2025

Drew L Bowyer
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Planning and Realty Services Community and Development Services
12 Gilbertson Dr.,
Simcoe, Ontario, N3Y 3N3
Attn: Joshua Mueller

Subject: File Number - ZNPL2025173

Location - PDOV PLAN 207 BLK 10 LOT 4 TO 5 - 711 Main Street, Port Dover

I am writing with the request that council accept these written comments as my submission to Norfolk County in relation to the above-noted proposed zoning amendment.

I have practiced law in Port Dover for almost 20 years. While that gives me an advantaged perspective into some of the issues raised by the application, I am writing in my personal capacity as a resident and owner of two properties in close proximity to the proposed development.

It is my submission that the committee reject the current application. My primary concern with the project is that it is an overly dense housing development in a dominantly R1 zone.

I am certainly aware of a genuine need for housing development in Port Dover. I appreciate the fact that both our local and provincial policies favour the intensification of housing and reduction of urban sprawl. Those are important concerns that need to be acknowledged. However, these policies do not support intensification to the exclusion of other important considerations including the general character of the neighbourhood, community aesthetics, and the existing county zoning plan. The decision necessarily requires a **balancing** of all these factors.

In balancing the interests for this particular proposal, it is my opinion that the property is much more amenable to a less intense development. I think this conclusion is abundantly supported by the fact that the proposed development, in addition to the zoning change required, also requires significant and substantial variances to the existing zoning provisions.

To wit, I think obvious that any application requiring **substantial** changes to:

- unit size requirements
- side yard requirements
- rear yard requirements
- parking requirements
- number of units permitted

does not fit within either the county plan or provincial policy. It is simply seeking to fit (or “jam”) what is, at minimum, an R5 development into an R4 zoning application. It may have been a wise or strategic decision by the applicant to seek approval for a modified R4 plan rather than a more accurate R5 plan – but doing so does not change the nature of the actual development proposed.

I am not opposed to the development of this property. I am opposed to the over-development of this property.

I think there are valid arguments to be made in favour of an R3 (quad-plex) zoning for these lands. Certainly there would be strong reasons to favour an R2 (duplex) zoning. I am persuaded that a large double-lot can be better used, in accordance with provincial policy, for more than a single-family residence. Perhaps the green space preserved by the residential lots in these older areas of Port Dover is a fading artifact of its history. However, it does not follow that **any** level of development should be favoured.

I return to my opening observation – which is the need (and legal requirement) that there be a balancing of interests and policies and considerations. Put simply, the proposed development does not strike an appropriate balance.

I am aware of many of the considerations that will be raised by both the proponents and certainly the opponents of the development. I do not intend to address them in my own submissions. They do however, necessarily form part of the balanced approach I am advocating.

I am also aware of a sentiment amongst some that our own council is not at liberty to deny the application; that there is a likelihood that if the application is denied, the decision will be successfully appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal. While that is a statistical fact that must be recognized, this level of deference (at least) or political impotence (at worst) is concerning. I think such a level of capitulation ignores a growing trend at the OLT to defer to municipal decisions where there is substantial non-compliance with existing zoning provisions. Many of the OLT decisions are based on a municipality's failure to balance their decision-making – a failure in the process, rather than in the result.

Council can not substitute its own zoning preference for that which the applicant has applied. However, council and the planning department can certainly signal to the applicant that a lower-density option would be much more in line with local and provincial policy, while also addressing many of the concerns raised by local residents.

Respectfully,

Drew Bowyer

From: [Al Meneses](#)
To: [Alisha Cull](#); [Bohdan Wynnycky](#); [Bill Cridland](#)
Subject: FW: Monte Sonnenberg follow-up, ZNPL2025173 711 Main St. Port Dover
Date: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 4:15:18 PM
Attachments: [norfolk-county-vector-logo_6fea2e97-b4ac-4244-b421-26b6dae352a3.png](#)
[artifacts.JPG](#)

Al Meneses

Chief Administrative Officer
Administration
Office of the CAO
50 Colborne St. S, Simcoe, Ontario, N3Y 4H3
519-426-5870 x1225 | 226-NORFOLK



Providing valued public services that are responsive to our community's needs

We are committed to providing high-quality customer service and a safe and respectful environment for all. Read our Respect and Responsibilities Policy at norfolkCounty.ca/RR.

From: msonnenberg msonnenberg [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 2, 2025 3:55 PM
To: Councillor Adam Veri <adam.veri@norfolkcounty.ca>; Joshua Mueller <joshua.mueller@norfolkcounty.ca>
Subject: Monte Sonnenberg follow-up, ZNPL2025173 711 Main St. Port Dover

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good afternoon gentlemen. Plenty of neighbors came over for our yard sale Sunday and we of course were talking about the proposed development at 711 Main Street. Many were interested in the history of my old house as it does have quite an interesting past, built as it was around 1865. I was commenting how -- while gardening in my backyard many years ago -- I would find old things from the past. I've found a few rusted hand-made blacksmith nails, pieces of old painted porcelain and a 1904 King Edward VII Canadian penny. I also found an old flint in the corner of my garden near the property line with the old Gibbons property (711 Main). A friend with knowledge of these things explained at the time that it is a flint knife point and not an arrowhead as many people assume. I also found a piece of reddish quartz with an edge that has an interesting shape and may have been used for something, I don't know, I'm no expert.

As well, when I bought my property in 1996, there was quite a nice sandbox located between the two pine trees referenced in my previous correspondence. However, the box's pine-log rails rotted over the years, fell apart & I decided to remove everything while I was renting a dumpster for a garage clean-out. While cleaning up the area of the sandbox, I found what I believe to be a flint spear point (far left in attached photo).

In any event, someone I was talking to Sunday says this might be relevant to the zoning application and proposal for redevelopment and that the planning dept. should be apprised of it so make of it what you will. Who knows what was going on around here in the years before European settlement? I will bring the relics to Wednesday's public hearing. See you there and best regards,
Monte Sonnenberg, [REDACTED]



File Number - ZNPL2025173

August 25 2025

Attn: Joshua Mueller, BES URPT CPT MCIP

Planner

Planning and Realty Services Community
and Development Services

12 Gilbertson Dr., Simcoe, Ontario, N3Y 3N3
519-426-5870 x5039

Subject:

File Number - ZNPL2025173, Location - PDOV PLAN 207 BLK 10 LOT 4, TO 5

Roll Number - 3310334020137000000, Civic - 711 Main Street Dear

Mr. Mueller,

Our recommendation is to reject this project.

This is based on our comments below in *red italics font* for the variances requested from the ZONING BY-LAW OF NORFOLK COUNTY 1-Z-2014.

<https://www.norfolkcounty.ca/media/5nddfr3u/zoning-by-law-consolidation.pdf>

Property area

40.23 m wide x 47.27 m deep which is calculated as 1901.67 m²

5.4.2a) Property area per unit for 12 units is 158 m². This is far below the requirement of 195 m² per unit. Note in drawing PC/Z100 states in red font that a lot area minimum is not required. This is really not a true statement.

5.4.2 Zone Provisions

In an R4 Zone, no building or structure shall be erected or altered except in accordance with the provisions for each of the following dwelling types:

Provision	Street Townhouse (per unit)	Group Townhouse Stacked Townhouse
a) minimum lot area:		
i) attached garage	156 square metres	195 square metres
ii) corner lot	264 square metres	195 square metres
iii) detached garage	162 square metres (access via a rear lane)	215 square metres

5.4.2b) - Lot frontage is 40.23 m, note that this requirement is based on a maximum of 8 units (as per clause 5.4.4), not the proposed 12 units.

30 m divided by 8 units which is 3.75 m per unit

For proposed 12 units, frontage required = $12 \times 3.75 = 45$ m, the frontage of this lot is 40.23, therefore, the fact that this is not exceeded and not shown in red font on drawing PC/Z100 is not really true.

b) minimum lot frontage:		
i) interior lot	6.5 metres	30 metres
ii) corner lot	11 metres	30 metres
iii) corner lot accessed by a rear lane	6.5 metres	

5.4.2c) - No garage, therefore not a requirement

c) minimum front yard:		
i) attached garage	6 metres	6 metres
ii) detached garage or rear yard parking	1.5 metres (accessed by a rear lane)	1.5 metres

5.4.2d) - Frontage is 40.23, therefore, not a requirement

d) minimum exterior side yard:		
i) with a 6 metre front yard	6 metres	6 metres
ii) with a 1.5 metre front yard	1.5 metres	1.5 metres

5.4.2e) - This requirement is barely met on the southeast side behind the units, this requirement is not met on the southwest side, beside the parking lot. The fact that this requirement is exceeded and not shown in red font is somewhat not true.

e) minimum interior side yard:	1.2 metres	3 metres
f) minimum rear yard:		

5.4.2f) The tall stacked townhouse which is two and one half stories tall (actually shown as 11 m in provision 5.4.2h), therefore, this proposal of 11 m high is much higher than a garage. The requirement of this clause is a setback of 7.5 m for a garage which typically no where near 2 1/2 stories tall. Stating in red font is true that there is no garage, however, listing the 3 m setback on the same line as the "no garage" line item which shows no requirement in the "Required" columns is somewhat not true.

f) minimum rear yard:		
i) attached garage	7.5 metres	7.5 metres
ii) detached garage	13 metres (access via a rear lane including half of the lane)	7.5 metres

5.4.2g) This is a stacked townhouse and this clause should apply. Showing the provided as "N/A" is untrue.

g)	minimum separation: between townhouse <i>dwelling</i> s	2 metres	2 metres
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5.4.2 h) The proposal is stating the provided height will be a maximum of 11 m or 36 feet high.

h)	maximum <i>building height</i> :	11 metres [8-Z-2017]	11 metres [8-Z-2017]
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5.4.3 Proposed stacked townhouse has walls that are joined, therefore, the 1.2 m setback is not required.

5.4.3 Setback from Mutual Side Lot Line

Notwithstanding the *required side yard*, on a *mutual side lot line* separating two (2) attached *townhouse units*, no *interior side yard* is *required* where the walls are joined, where the walls are not joined, a 1.2 metre *side yard* shall be *required*.

5.4.4 The requirement for not more than 8 units is exceeded by 50% based on the proposal of 12 units. This is an enormous variance that is being requested.

5.4.4 Maximum Units in a Townhouse Dwelling

No more than eight (8) *dwelling units* shall be located in a townhouse *dwelling*.

4.2.4b) Leaving only 1.5 m distance from the parking lot to the dwellings is 50% less than this clause requires. The 1.5 m proposes is an unsafe distance. Not showing the 3 m requirement in the "Required" columns of drawing PC/Z100 is somewhat not true.

b) for group townhouses and apartment dwellings, no parking lot shall be located

Norfolk County Zoning By-Law 1-Z-2014

closer than 3 metres from any *dwelling* on the *lot* or of any *interior lot line* abutting another residential *Zone*;

4.9a) *The proposed number of parking spaces is only 80% of the requirement. This lack of parking could potentially cause residents to park on the street. As this is a main highway and also close to a crosswalk, there is a very real safety concern for the lack of required parking spaces.*

4.9 **Number of Parking Spaces**

Any building, structure or use shall have parking spaces provided and maintained in accordance with the following:

	<u>Type of Use</u>	<u>Minimum Requirement</u>
a)	<u>Residential</u> <i>single detached, semi-detached, duplex, tri-plex, four-plex, townhouse dwellings and vacation home [8-Z-2017]</i>	<i>2 parking spaces for each dwelling unit</i>

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have Any questions regarding this reply, please call us at [REDACTED].

Yours truly,

Michael and Jane
Hodder [REDACTED]