

DEPUTATION REQUEST

Request for deputation, any written submissions and background information for consideration by City Council must be submitted to the Legislative and Court Services Department by 9:00 a.m. on the **WEDNESDAY PRIOR TO THE REQUESTED MEETING**.

PLEASE PRINT

COUNCIL MEETING DATE: JUNE 19		
GENERAL COMMITTEE MOTION NUMBER:		
SUBJECT: REZONING 521/527 BIG BAY PT. RD.		
NAME OF PERSON TO APPEAR: DALE LAWOR		
EMAIL ADDRESS:		
STREET ADDRESS:		
City		Postal Code
PHONE:	HOME:	BUSINESS:
NAME OF PERSON REQUESTING APPEARANCE (if different from person appearing):		
PHONE:	HOME:	BUSINESS:
NAME OF GROUP OR PERSON(S) BEING REPRESENTED (if applicable):		
BRIEF STATEMENT OF PURPOSE OF DEPUTATION:		
LETTER SUBMITTED WITH REQUEST: YES NO		

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City of Barrie, Legislative and Court Services Department
70 Collier Street, P.O. Box 400, Barrie, L4M 4T5
Tel: 705 739-4204 Fax: 739-4243
www.barrie.ca

REZONING 521/527 BIG BAY POINT ROAD

Dave Lawlor

Barrie Ontario

PARKING, REZONING AND HOUSING IN THE SOUTH SIDE OF BARRIE - 2017

The application to rezone 521/527 by the developer rests on the proposition that reduced on the site would be feasible. However because of nearby conditions his plans to accommodate on-site parking are actually not at all realistic or workable. The developer had applied for a variance from the 1.5 standard to do this, but the proposed ratio of one parking space per unit is completely unsupportable since (and this is something that tends to be ignored in this case) overflow parking simply cannot be accommodated out on Big Bay Point Road itself for the reasons detailed below. Nor should higher density traffic be encouraged that will add to the already high volume of traffic already there. As we have seen repeatedly with even one car parked out on that street the damage would be done.

At this time I have two points I wish to make.

Firstly, I would like to draw attention to line 31 of the Rezoning Amendment under consideration which states that the lots 521 and 527 are within the local zone of intensification. It should be noted that this is accompanied by an illustration that shows they clearly are not. While the City of Barrie does not appear to find this significant I'm not sure that the OMB or the Local Town Planning Tribunal will be equally dismissive.

The second point is that whether there has been a formal declaration of policy or not- and as is supported by the facts and history of the matter - a change in planning direction to unrealistic housing intensification with reduced parking is contrary to both the long-time planning and practice of the City of Barrie up to this date.

Any plan for residential and traffic development on this part of the south side of the City of Barrie Ontario must realistically take into account, and make adjustments for, the unique history and characteristics of the 13th Line Road - now called Big Bay Point Road.

Big Bay Point Road, on the south side of Barrie, parallels the line of the elongated form of Kempenfelt Bay, around which the City is built, running some seventeen kilometers from Bayview Drive east, to what is locally called, "the Point." From Bayview Drive (near the 400 highway at the west end) to the 20th sideroad Big Bay Point Road to the east it is currently in the jurisdiction of the City of Barrie, and from the 20th to the Point it is in the jurisdiction of the Town of Innisfil – that is to say simply that one half of it belongs to Barrie and the other half belongs to Innisfil.

It is clear that increasing residential and commercial development in the Big Bay Point Road/Yonge Street area has been accelerated by the proximity to Toronto with its population of 6 million - a fact that is amplified by the current escalation in real estate values which make selling high in Toronto and buying low here an attractive proposition. A simple view of traffic on Highway 400 underlines an ever increasing daily commuter usage and this is compounded seasonally by a massive northbound flow by cottagers in the summer.

Beginning back in 2007 the City of Barrie announced a number of measures intended to support residential traffic flow coming into Barrie from the east where a new suburban site along Prince William Way was growing (and now occupies some 3 square kilometres). Barrie pushed Hurst Drive north to

Lakeshore in order to bypass the Yonge Street/Big Bay Point Road intersection for those simply wishing to go downtown, and it widened Big Bay Point Road itself from Yonge Street east from two to five lanes to facilitate access to the 400, or in order to go to the growing retail area south at Mapleview and the 400.

At the time it was clear that the residential area around Prince William Way would continue to expand eastward into underdeveloped farmland that exists there. What was not so apparent to the citizens of Barrie was the much larger development already going into place at the Point, in the jurisdiction of Innisfil, called Friday Harbour.

In 2012 the Geranium Corporation announced the proposed development of a 1.5 billion dollar and 3.25 square kilometer resort and marina at the Point - clearly advertising its nearby availability to the citizens of Toronto. Included in the plan were some 53 acres of residential occupation and berthing facilities for 1,000 boats. With 1600 housing units in total its completion date was targeted for 2020. First day sales were in the order of 40 million dollars. Key to understanding the context of this enormous site is the fact that there are plans for, but currently no, services existing at the Point. There are no banks, no grocery stores, no barber shops, and no liquor stores – nothing. And it is probably not too much of a stretch so conclude that the same people that would travel there from Toronto on the 400 Highway will turn eastwards along Big Bay Point Road past the retail amenities at the Yonge Street intersection and would travel back to them to shop there. Perhaps with this in mind, and the race track character of traffic flow already, in 2016 the City of Barrie announced its intention to implement a parking ban on the full length of Big Bay Point Road.

The City had already announced a plan to extend Big Bay Point Road west towards the 400 Highway, also by 2020, and to further widen Big Bay Point Road to seven lanes from the Highway eastwards to Huronia Road.

Because of the accumulated effect, then no further development should be taken without a traffic study

With the obvious fact of residential expansion and the effect on traffic flow shown to this point, it came as somewhat of a surprise when, in March of 2017, the City of Barrie announced it would be hearing applications for rezoning at 621/527 Big Bay Point Road, just east of the bottleneck intersection with Yonge Street, in order to facilitate the construction of higher density townhouses there. With ever increasing traffic levels the repeated failure of the proposal to provide for adequate parking on-site meant that the overflow would either end up illegally (and dangerously) on Big Bay Point Road itself or improperly in nearby retail parking lots. In either case the increased impediment to traffic was obvious. So, once again, whether there had been a formal declaration of policy or not- as is supported by the facts of the matter - a change in direction to housing intensification without support of increased on-site parking is contrary to both the planning and practice of the City of Barrie up to this date as shown by its long continuing support of road work development.

The City of Barrie, following guidance from the Province of Ontario, had already said that it had wished to support the growth of six "Intensification Nodes" at six intersections in the City. It issued a diagram and on it were a number of perfect blue circles, as if drawn with a protractor. The symmetry of these circles suggested little real study had gone into it. When it was pointed out that lots 521 and 527 under consideration for rezoning were actually not even in the Intensification Node the City replied that the Nodes were actually more of a guideline than a rule....It was hard not to sense a certain lack of clarity in all this. One wondered if the vision under discussion was the product of solid urban planning principles at

all. Or of a dart board. There had been long ecological studies and archeological studies for the 400 linkage. But surprisingly enough, despite the far reaching concerns involved, no large scale traffic study had been conducted to forecast the effect of the proposed changes to the accumulated area. Perhaps this was because part was in Innisfil and part was in Barrie, and without any real thought to the fact Big Bay Point Road inescapably joined them both.

Conclusion

The rather vague effect of the "Intensification Node" at Yonge and Big Bay Point Road is clearly in direct contradiction to the City of Barrie's planning and practice up to this time – including the push through of Hurst to Lakeshore, the widening of Big Bay Point Road to five lanes, the connection of Big Bay Point Road to Harvie and then to the 400, the widening of Big Bay Point Road to seven lanes from Huronia to the 400 and the proposal for no parking on Big Bay Point Road. These measures are clearly all meant to serve increased traffic flow - and not higher density residency.

Submission of these points has been made to the City of Barrie, but to date they have remained unanswered. Without managed development it is hard to see how, but that in a few short years, there can be any other outcome here except excessive traffic congestion, accidents and inconvenience – and a repeat of the same over-trafficked dilemma that already exists in Barrie at Mapleview and the 400, and on Bayfield Street.

It is clear in passing the rezoning application that the City has chosen to ignore the facts and it is equally clear the question must now go on to the OMB or Local Town Planning Tribunal. Despite the pronouncements by political council or judicial courts there is one final arbiter of all matters - and that is truth. The problem with truth is that it cannot be modified or altered or ignored. The judgement of time merely reconfirms it. So the truth remains – the City has chosen to pursue a contrary course of adding more traffic to an already over-trafficked area and create another congested roadblock in Barrie.

Bad planning is not town planning at all.