

Town of Saint Andrews

Planning Report

To: Council

From: Xander Gopen, MCIP, RPP (NB)
Southwest New Brunswick Service Commission

Date: June 20, 2022

Property: PIDs 01320035 & 15054893

Owners: Jeff Holmes

Applicant: Bridle Path International Inc.

Zoning By-law: Z22-01, Central Commercial (CC) Zone

Municipal Plan: MP20-01 - Commercial, MP20-02 – Historic Business District

Summary: The applicant is seeking an amendment to MP20-02 to allow for a development taller than is allowed by proposals in the by-law.

Background:

PIDs 01320035 & 15054893 were the site of the HMS Transportation company but are now vacant. There was a previous development proposed for this site for condominiums (later apartments) that were granted several variances, including a height variance to allow a 14.4m structure and a rezoning to the Mixed Use zone. Because conditions of the development agreement regarding start dates were not met, the development agreement was nullified and the properties reverted to Central Commercial zoning. The Secondary Municipal Plan (2MP) was not in effect at that time.

A new development has been proposed for the site: A 4-storey, 12.2m high, 30-unit apartment building with ground floor commercial uses is now proposed. 39 parking spaces (including two barrier-free) will be provided, with all but two underground. So long as the residential use does not front onto Water St., such uses are allowed as secondary to a main commercial use in the CC zone.

The 2MP now regulates height in the Historic Business District so the variance given previously is no longer applicable. As per the 2MP, building height shall be:

- a) Identical to another main building or structure on the block;
- b) An average of the main buildings on the same block; or

- c) Within a 10% tolerance of the average of the main buildings on the same block.
- d) Notwithstanding 6(a), 6(b), and 6(c), no building shall exceed a maximum height of 12.5m.

The proposed development does not meet the height standards of a)-c), but does meet d) and in order for the development to proceed, the 2MP would need to be amended by exempting PIDs 01320035 & 15054893 from 6.a)-c). As the amending by-law specifically references height, the massing requirements of 6.a)-c). would still apply.

Municipal Plan:

2.1.2(2)(8) Environment and Climate Change Policies

Council shall support efficient and sustainable land use and development patterns and a mix of uses and densities that support pedestrian movement and that improve energy efficiency wherever feasible and appropriate.

Planners note: This development will add 30 dwelling units in an already serviced area within walking and cycling distance of amenities.

2.5.2(1) Economic Policies

Council shall seek to provide an economic climate conducive to investment and the growth of year-round employment opportunities while protecting and enhancing the quality of life in Saint Andrews.

Planners note: Lack of rental housing impacts local businesses and institutions when housing is not available for staff or students.

2.8.2(1) Housing Policies

It shall be a policy of Council to understand the need for the development of housing to meet the needs of seniors, students and other special needs populations. Council shall ensure that new or converted housing for these populations is appropriate to the character of the Town.

Planners note: Apartment units are desperately needed in Town and these will likely serve many demographics including seniors and students as well as families and young professionals.

Discussion:

Saint Andrews is experiencing a housing crisis which has only been made worse by increased demand due to COVID. Rental housing is one of the greatest needs in the community and this development has many features that meet municipal plan goals. This is a highly centralized location in walking distance of most shops and amenities within Town. Council is well-aware of the housing crisis and spillover economic impacts. This development should have a significant impact on the Town's low vacancy rate (2.5% in March 2022; only 2 units available) and will ease pressure on the rental market which should help local employers and institutions. Adding 30 units in an already serviced location increases the energy efficiency of service provision and the Town as a whole.

While no building on the block is 12.2m tall, there are buildings on the block and across the street from the proposed development up to 12m tall. The proposed building is designed so that the 4th storey is a podium, with less floor area than the lower 3 floors (setback 4.3m on the Water St. side and 3.4m on the Princess Royal St. side). This is a common urban design technique to allow greater height without increasing the visibility from the street. The non-podium portion is 9.8m high which would meet the requirements of the 2MP. As 6.d) restricts height to 12.5m and is not included in the exemption amendment, the building will be limited to that height. All other aspects of the Secondary Municipal Plan and Zoning By-law will still apply.

Land economics make this a challenging parcel of land to develop but it is in the Town's interest to see it developed appropriately. As well as 30 residential units, the building will have two commercial units fronting on to Water St. ensuring the urban design of the HBD is continued. This is much preferable to the vacant lot that currently exists, and the developer believes that a viable business plan depends on the fourth storey.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that Council begins Secondary Municipal Plan amendment process by setting the date for a Public Presentation of MP20-02-01 as per Community Planning Act 25(1).



Xander Gopen, MCIP, RPP(NB)
Senior Planner

Attachments:

Height Map

Site Plans (separate PDF)

