

Clock Tower Redevelopment

Oral deputation by Greg King at the February 3rd, 2014 Town Council Meeting

Good evening Mr. Mayor, Councilors:

I am here tonight to voice my support for the Clock Tower redevelopment project put forward by the Forrest Group. As a property owner and resident of Main Street for over 21 years, this project impacts me directly.

Throughout my years on Main Street I would describe the environment as quaint but run down. In truth, it was a place that people avoided. Lately, it has started changing for the better. With the closing of the bars and the opening of restaurants as well as Riverwalk Commons, families are now starting to come to Main Street. But this is only a start, retailers are still struggling and there are still vacant storefronts.

We need more people living on the street for Main Street to really come alive. Customers are necessary for the businesses to be viable and more local residents would support and attract businesses on Main Street. As all available land has been built on, the only way to add more residents is to build up. A mid-rise project would attract younger people and empty nesters. As well, higher density dwellings will be more affordable. The higher density is both economically and environmentally desirable.

In order for Main Street to flourish it must be a living entity and not a fossil. Successful communities evolve. A sustainable heritage district links the past with the present or else it becomes irrelevant. The Newmarket of today is not the Newmarket of the past and won't be of the future.

This is not to say that heritage preservation is not desirable but it is expensive and someone must pay for it to happen. Property owners must be able to make a return on their investment as well compensation for higher on-going operating expenses. Otherwise, they will just let their properties decay: "Demolition by neglect." We must remain practical and not be guided totally by ideology, as life is compromise.

I am looking forward to meeting my new neighbours.

Thank you Mr. Mayor.

Greg King

Newmarket ON