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## **Minister's Zoning Order Request (835 Gorham Street – Blue Door Support Services) Staff Report to Council**

Report Number: 2023-02

Department(s): Planning Services

Author(s): Casey Blakely

Meeting Date: January 16, 2023

### **Recommendations**

1. That the report entitled Minister's Zoning Order Request (835 Gorham Street – Blue Door Support Services), dated January 16, 2023 be received; and,
2. That Council supports and has no objection to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing enacting a Minister's Zoning Order for the subject lands, which would permit the development of emergency and temporary housing; and,
3. That Council direct Staff to work with Blue Door Support Services and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to prepare a Minister's Zoning Order for the subject lands; and,
4. That Council direct staff to expedite the review and approval of the subsequent planning approvals and building permit applications required to move the project forward to construction; and,
5. That this resolution be provided to the applicant to send to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing as a statement of Council's support; and copied to the Regional Municipality of York; and,
6. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's support of a request for a Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) for 835 Gorham Street on behalf of Blue Door Support Services (Blue Door). The MZO would amend the current site specific Residential Detached Dwelling 30m (R1-B) Zone in the Town's Zoning By-law 2010-40, to permit the construction of townhouses for emergency and temporary housing.

## **Background**

### **Property Area and Context**

The subject property is located at 835 Gorham Street, on the north-east corner of Alexander Road and Gorham Street. Please see the Appendix 1 – Location Map.

The subject site currently contains a three-storey detached home occupied by Kevin's Place Youth Shelter. Surrounding land uses include:

North: Single-detached residential dwellings

East: Unoccupied former commercial office lands subject to another development application and single-detached residential dwellings

South: Single-detached residential dwellings and a church

West: Single-detached residential dwellings

### **Proposed Development**

Blue Door is proposing to construct dwellings for emergency and temporary housing. This would consist of 14 3-storey stacked townhouses. The first floor will consist of 1 one-bedroom and 4 two-bedroom units, and the second and third storey will be three bedroom family-sized units. The units will be a mix of affordable rental and supportive units, with staff and an office on site to provide assistance for those in the supportive units.

Pedestrian access to Alexander Road and to Gorham Street is proposed, along with 14 vehicle parking spaces and 6 bicycle parking spaces which would be accessed from Gorham Street. The development is intended for transitional and supportive stays. Blue Door has advised, that in their experience with similar facilities, many of the residents will not have cars, and as such the 14 vehicle parking spaces can accommodate the 14 units and visitors, along with 3 vehicle spaces for staff.

Figure 1 below is a concept sketch of the proposed townhouses. The design of the site will continue to evolve through the detailed design process at the time of site plan approval.

A letter received from Glen Schnarr & Associates, dated December 13, 2022 on behalf of Blue Door, requests Council's endorsement of the proposed MZO. A further planning Minister's Zoning Order Request (835 Gorham Street – Blue Door Support Services)

analysis also provided by Glen Schnarr & Associates, provides an overview of the proposed development and additional context for the request. Please see Appendix 3.

Figure 1



*Figure 3: Elevation looking east*

## **Minister's Zoning Order (MZO)**

Section 47 of the Planning Act grants the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) the ability to authorize a Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) to zone any property in Ontario. Zoning orders are used to protect matters of provincial interest and expedite approvals for critical projects. MZO's are not required to comply with all applicable policies, including the Town's Official Plan and Provincial policy. The MZO process does not require public notice or consultation and cannot be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT).

Should a Minister's Zoning Order be granted, the applicant would coordinate with the Town and Ministry to prepare the final zoning order.

## **Discussion**

### **Existing Zoning**

The subject lands are zoned Residential Detached Dwelling 30m (R1-B) Zone under Zoning By-law 2010-40. This zone only permits detached dwelling units and stacked townhouses are not permitted under this zone.

An emergency shelter and transitional housing building is not permitted under the current site-specific zoning. As a result, a Zoning By-law Amendment or MZO is required in order to permit the proposed use and develop site-specific zone provisions for the subject lands. Blue Door is seeking a MZO to permit the use and expedite the project to meet deadlines related to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) funding program. To meet this program, applications require the appropriate zoning be in place by March 15, 2023, or that timing for the appropriate zoning is provided by that date.

### **Town of Newmarket Official Plan**

The subject lands are designated Residential in the Town's Official Plan and are within the Historic Character Area. Although a MZO is not required to conform to the Official Plan, stacked townhouses are permitted and the proposed use is considered a special needs housing and would be permitted within the Residential Area.

While not required, it is staff's opinion that the proposal conforms to the Town's Official Plan.

### **York Region Official Plan**

The subject lands are designated Urban Area and Community Area in the Regional Official Plan. Although a MZO is not required to comply with all applicable policy, a variety of uses including residential and community services are permitted within Urban Areas.

### **Other Approvals**

Should the MZO be granted by the Province, a future Site Plan application would still be required to review the detailed site design.

Staff will apply the Town's Urban Design Guidelines, as well, in order to provide a high quality design, and demonstrate compatibility and transition to surrounding existing land uses. These matters would be considered through the site plan review process.

### **Conclusion**

Due to the Rapid Housing Initiative funding and the length of time to process planning approvals, it is planning staff's opinion that an MZO is appropriate in this instance.

Planning Staff have no objection to the request for a Minister's Zoning Order to permit a land use change for the subject lands to permit 14 three-storey townhouses for emergency and temporary housing.

## **Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages**

- Extraordinary Places and Spaces

## **Consultation**

Although the Planning Act does not require notice and/or public consultation for a Minister's Zoning Order, Blue Door has committed to providing opportunity for public consultation. Blue Door has advised they will be holding a future open house and a community liaison group will be established to engage the public and receive feedback on the proposal.

## **Human Resource Considerations**

None.

## **Budget Impact**

None.

## **Attachments**

Appendix 1 – Conceptual Site Plan

Appendix 2 – Location Map

Appendix 3 – Blue Door's Request to Council

## **Submitted by**

Casey Blakely, Senior Planner, Development Services

## **Approved for Submission**

Adrian Cammaert, Manager, Planning Services

Jason Unger, Director, Planning & Building Services

Peter Noehammer, Commissioner, Development & Infrastructure Services

## Contact

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