

SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSIONS

Honourable Mayor, distinguished members of Council. This is not the first time this issue has come before Council.

Serenity Circle is a one-street cul-de-sac, adjacent to Ellis Street, consisting of 21 homes and a road with two boulevards. I appear before you to express the unanimous will, as demonstrated in the petition, of every single one of the 21 homeowners on Serenity Circle. The request is for Council to:

- a) pass a resolution expressing to Canada Post that it is the strong will of Council that the community mailboxes serving only residents of Serenity Circle, currently located on Ellis Street, be relocated to the cement pad on the West end of the most Easterly of the two boulevards on Serenity Circle,
- b) amend the Town's parking by law to specifically permit Canada Post vehicles to park with their left wheels against a curb, if necessary, for purposes of unloading mail into the community mailboxes.
- c) Instruct Administration not only to communicate your decision to Canada Post, but to support it, by strenuously arguing, without reservation, that the boxes are considered a danger to the public in their current location and must be relocated as requested.

Last time, on July 25, 2017, when residents were appealing to Canada Post for this relocation, Council supported residents' efforts to move those community mailboxes from Ellis Street, to Serenity Circle, specifically rejecting Public Works' report, which catalogued the same objections to the move that we are presented with tonight.

Unfortunately, following Council's approval, the wrong message, a negative one, was conveyed to Canada Post which we believe resulted in their refusal to approve the move, Canada Post appearing to believe that it was Council's wishes, as opposed to Administration's wishes, that the relocation not be made.

I won't repeat the reasons for that conclusion, as they are set out in my written submissions before you.

I will also not repeat the ambiguities in the parking by-law which I pointed out in my written submissions, portions of which were cited by Mr. Marra in his earlier report, to stand for the proposition that it would be illegal for a mail truck to stop to unload mail, which presumption formed a large part of the reasoning of Canada Post in refusing to relocate the boxes last time around.

The main issue here, even more now than it was back in 2017, is safety.

Briefly, the reasons which make this move even more imperative than back in 2017 are as follows:

1. Traffic on Ellis Street has presented a danger to residents who stop at the mailboxes in their current location, to retrieve their mail. You have before you, a letter written by Mr. Bernie Renaud, resident on Serenity Circle which illustrates the dangerous nature of stopping to retrieve mail at a place where there is no lay-by to pull off the road.
2. When the original request was made in 2017, there were only a handful of homes built on Serenity Circle. Now, all lots are fully built up, with more residents stopping on Ellis to pick up mail.
3. Valente Construction has received permission from Council to rezone the vacant property behind the Malden Zehr's store, which property is immediately across Ellis street from Serenity Circle, with a plan to build 178 condominium units called Creekside. It doesn't take a stretch of imagination to predict what that will do to traffic on Ellis Street.
4. A new development planned for the vacant land on the corner of Ellis and Wyoming Streets, East of the Home Hardware, will add multiple new apartment units, again, increasing traffic on Ellis.
5. Those walking to the mailboxes on Ellis Street face a long walk down a sidewalk which has no snow-clearing in the winter, and upon which slush is thrown by snowplows clearing Ellis Street.
6. There are many elderly people and some disabled residents who find the current location of the mailboxes treacherous to access.

On October 22, 2019, you may remember Mr. Karl Tanner, of Dillon Consulting appeared before Council to speak to the Valente Creekside rezoning application. In that meeting, Mr. Tanner referred to a traffic study undertaken in support of that proposal. He told Council that Ellis Street is an arterial road, designed to handle 10-12,000 vehicles per day, and that their study shows that currently, 3500 vehicles use that road daily. It's not hard to imagine the danger that presents for not only residents, getting out of their cars to retrieve their mail, but also for traffic that has to bypass residents' stopped vehicles, and daily, a mail delivery van, as well.

By what measure does it make any sense to have a community mailbox on a street with nowhere to pull off and get out, that currently sees 3,500 vehicles a day travel on it? And how much worse will this get with increasing traffic by reason of more development in the coming days and months?

Now, picture Serenity Circle - a sleepy cul-de-sac street with 21 homes on it that sees MAYBE a few delivery or service vehicles in a day, in addition to the few residents who come and go.

Mr. Marra submits to you as Exhibit 5 to his report, a photograph taken by someone, on February 19th. It shows snow plowed onto the area where residents propose the mailbox be moved to. That was after a significant and increasingly rare snowfall of 6 3/4" on February 15th. His intent seems to be to demonstrate that this is an area that will be blocked with snow in the winter and is therefore inappropriate to locate mailboxes there. Just because snow is pushed into that area now, does that mean it is the only place that snow can go? What he doesn't show you is that there is an area on the opposite or East end of that boulevard, in the much larger cul-de-sac area where snow is piled by the plow that can easily accommodate the snow which is plowed onto the area to which the mailboxes are proposed to be located. Furthermore, out of 365 days of the year, most likely 350 days would be without any concerns relating to snow clearing. Do 15 days a year justify refusing to consider residents' safety and convenience?

Now, compare and contrast the current location of the mailboxes, in the winter, with the proposed location.

Residents of Serenity Circle are diligent in clearing snow from the sidewalks and driveways in front of their houses and the street is also cleared of snow. It is a quick and safe walk to the boulevard. If you look at the photograph on page 9 of my submissions, taken by a resident on February 6th, residents who chose to walk to their mailboxes on Ellis have to trudge about 175' from Serenity Circle, through snow and slush which does not get cleared.

I ask you, who does the Town seek to convenience? 21 tax paying residents whose properties contribute a cumulative assessed value of \$21,000,000 to the Town, or the snow-plow driver?

Mr. Marra also unfortunately refers to the proposed location of the mailboxes, (which, incidentally, we are given to understand was the preferred location by former Town Engineer Bob Hayes) as being in the "middle of the road", as if to infer the spot is in a dangerous location. We watched, over the past few years, while the houses were being constructed on the street, contractors parking in front of that area, due to the limited parking on the street. Their trucks were easily accommodated there, with no obstruction to traffic at all, because the road is open and wide. And they parked there in all seasons...

And it is not only the safety of residents that a relocation of the mailboxes will gain. Those concerns have been expressed by, and held in common with Canada Post.

There is no logical or rational reason for the Town (or, indeed, Canada Post) to oppose relocation of these mailboxes. To the contrary, as your predecessor Council concluded, it makes eminent sense.

And, the Town is not a silent partner, but has a voice, when it comes to the location of these mailboxes. Indeed, Canada Post policy, as expressed in their 2015 Policy Statement, included in the materials I have submitted, clearly states the following:

“At Canada Post we are committed to working with municipalities as we convert the remaining one third of Canadian households that receive door-to-door mail delivery to community mailboxes. Working with municipal leaders and staff has been our approach since community mailboxes were first introduced in the late 1980’s and remains our guiding principle as we install them in many communities...”

It goes on to say:

“We work closely with municipalities to find the safest, most convenient locations for each neighbourhood to ensure city staff resources can be used most efficiently.”

It may be understood, therefore that the attitude and approach taken by the Town is extremely important in the decision as to where these mailboxes are to be located. It may be inferred that the 2017 communication to Canada Post following Council’s resolution of support of the residents, by the inclusion of the Administration’s negative report, with all its perceived drawbacks, and the omission of the content of the resolution, sent the wrong signal to the Ombudsman and clearly resulted in Council’s wishes being misconstrued by Canada Post.

Should Council approve of the petition of the residents, Canada Post needs to be reminded of their guidelines, and Town administration should select a person to convey that message both verbally and in writing, who is capable of expressing Council’s will clearly, unequivocally and in no uncertain terms.

In conclusion, the residents ask you to:

- a) review and amend the parking by-law, as necessary, to remove any ambiguities which would prevent Canada Post vehicles from delivering mail legally, to the proposed location,
- b) pass a resolution expressing the imperative wish that the Community Mailboxes be relocated to the West end of the Easterly boulevard on Serenity Circle on the concrete pad poured specifically for that purpose,
- c) Instruct Administration not only to communicate your decision to Canada Post, but to support it, by strenuously arguing, without reservation, that the boxes are considered a danger to the public in their current location and must be relocated as requested.

Thank you for your patience and consideration.