

Nov 25th 2020

Dear Mayor and Council.

Re Rezoning 5298 Alta Lake Road.

It seems to me that the vast majority of letters that you have received on this rezoning have either not supported it or at least questioned some of its key proposals. **This is a clear signal to the Council that a lot more work needs to be done on this application and that some of its key designs need to be questioned and challenged.**

While it is great that we are getting more Employee Housing, let us take the time to “get this right” and get a great deal (not a good deal) for the Whistler Community.

One issue that needs to be challenged is density. The current zoning was approved (in 2002), in order to create a “site sensitive” development in a forested lakeside setting and the density was approved to respect this objective. Since 2002 lots has changed in Whistler; two of these changes are particularly relevant to this rezoning and to thinking about the right density for this site:

1. Whistler has grown substantially, providing many benefits and now many “growth” challenges. **This means there is now MORE (not less) of a need to preserve and protect our “special” outdoor spaces in Whistler,** otherwise the creeping negative impacts of growth will start to affect our daily Whistler lives (I think they already have!). Nita Lake remains one of those special places and therefore we should do all we can to ensure that the lake and its neighbourhood is well preserved and protected. This does not mean no development but it means not too much density and respecting the density of the current zoning, rather than massively changing it. It also means making sure the Nita Lake neighbourhood character is preserved. If we get Nita Lake “wrong” surely we will have got the balance of “good growth” and “bad growth” wrong for the Whistler community as a whole.

2. **In 2002, there was no Provincial Riparian legislation**, and so all of the 5298 Alta Lake land could be built on (approx. 39,000 sqm). Since then the Riparian Legislation has been passed so that Lakes and Creeks can be protected. 5298 is on a Lake and has a Creek running through it, so that this **Riparian legislation has significantly reduced the land available to be built on. However, this legal requirement to protect our environment seems to have had little effect on the proposed density.** The buildable land has been reduced by -51% (largely due to the Riparian zones) and yet the total building density has been increased by + 37% and the Market home density increased by a massive + 123% (compared to the original zoning). In FSR terms (total building density/ buildable land) the increase is over 2.5x. Why is the beauty of Nita Lake being compromised because the developer bought expensive land, and where a large portion of it he cannot build on.? The Council should acknowledge that the environmental legislation has reduced the available buildable land and the density should be adjusted accordingly. This is a good starting point for the Council to negotiate in order to provide a great deal for Whistler.

In February 2019, the RMOW planning report questioned the proposed increased density and suggested that it was not appropriate for the site. Perhaps they were thinking of the points above. Either way it seems as if this issue disappeared off the radar for no good reason. Why was this? **A curious change in direction that does little do build confidence that the density issue has been carefully and correctly debated.**

I respect that the council has many issues to deal with and that this is a multi-dimensional issue. But surely density is a fundamental issue and one that we need to get right and need to have very good answers for.

I thank you for your thoughtfulness and your consideration

Respectfully

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