



Falaise Community Association
Growing a stronger community together

Saanich Public Hearing 855 Falaise Crescent

January 18, 2022

Thank you, Mr. Mayor, and good evening councillors. My name is Stuart Macpherson, and I am president of the Falaise Community Association. I am here to present the FCA's position on the 855 Falaise Crescent subdivision application.

You may recall that this application first came to the attention of the community in 2018 when the immediate neighbourhood adjacent to 855 Falaise was notified of the application. At that time, it was opposed by our community as it would create two narrow skinny lots with extremely large houses. This was seen to be totally out of character with the neighborhood. In addition, if approved, the proposal included the cutting down of four protected Garry oak trees including the largest one in the centre of the property (Tree #1986). At the Committee of the Whole meeting in 2019 we were able to convince council to require the applicant to look at saving more trees and reducing the house sizes so that they were more compatible with the neighbourhood. Council also required the developer to hold more consultations with the community.

In January 2020 we held a community meeting with the developer at Commonwealth Place. Thirty-six residents attended, which was an indicator of their concern and interest in the application. Concern was expressed over on-street parking and the narrow roadway. We were told that it may be possible to save tree #1986. The applicant agreed to consider saving more oak trees and looking at joint driveway access for the two proposed lots. In November 2020 the developer came back to Council with a revised proposal. The houses had been minimally reduced in size and the one large oak tree (#1986) was to be retained. Council decided to proceed to a public hearing subject to the developer examining the planned underground servicing for the two proposed lots as well as examining the road drainage pattern. At this meeting, the FCA stated that it would not be opposed to the application if four conditions were considered:

1. Saving tree #1992 and protecting tree #1987 during the road widening construction
2. Widening the road (Falaise Crescent) to allow safer on-street parking
3. Installing a catchment basin to prevent water running down the road from Falaise Park
4. Establish a covenant protecting non-invasive vegetation along the east side property line at the back of the lot

The resubmitted application package includes Supplementary Report #3 (December 1, 2021) that you are reviewing this evening. It refers to and comments on the revised Tree Management Plan (Gye & Associates May 26, 2021) and a Servicing Plan (McElhanney Consultants May 14, 2021) that details the underground servicing and stormwater control for the two lots. Otherwise, the application has not materially changed from the one that council reviewed at the November 2020 meeting.

Our review shows that the revised plans minimally address the four conditions. One has been met and the other three only partially. This is disappointing to us. I shall now comment on each one of them.

1. This was not met. Tree #1992 would not be saved. We suspect this is because the house footprint on Lot B is too large and the developer did not change this. There are no specific provisions for the



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protection of Tree #1987 on the boulevard of Lot B although the TMP says that underground servicing has been redesigned to minimize impacts on the protected trees on the boulevard.

2. This is partially met. The (preliminary) Servicing Plan provides for the road to be widened to Saanich's standard. We continue to be concerned with potential for unsafe on-street parking considering that these are large houses and the off-street parking indicated in the Servicing Plan shows only three parking spaces.
3. This is partially met. The (preliminary) Servicing Plan requires permeable driveways and stormwater servicing. There is an on-going issue with water flow from Falaise Park onto and running down the Falaise Crescent that affects neighbouring properties. We had understood that Saanich Engineering had looked at installing a catchment basin to deal with this, but this is not mentioned anywhere in the revisions.
4. This is met. The vegetation covenant is adequately covered in the application.

The applicant has agreed to save Tree #1986. But it is disturbing to read in Supplementary Report#3 that despite all the protective measures stipulated in the TMP "Even then, its long-term viability and vitality is questionable". To us this statement seems to foreshadow the possibility that none of the trees we advocated for will be saved.

We also want to comment on the replacement of the three Garry oak trees that would be cut down. We agree that there is insufficient room on the two proposed lots (A and B) to plant six replacement trees. The cash -in-lieu proposed of \$6150 as compensation for the lost trees seems to be a token amount given the emphasis on the Urban Forest Strategy and considering that the anticipated retail market value of the development is the order of \$3 million. We recommend that council, instead of accepting a donation of cash-in-lieu to the Urban Forest Reserve Fund, require that six replacement trees of suitable native species be planted in the adjoining Falaise Park.

In our view the applicant has made modest efforts to satisfy the FCA recommendations, but it falls short as the applicant was unwilling to compromise on the size of the houses and the footprint on Lot B. Although we recognize that council supports increased density in established neighbourhoods through subdividing to enable more houses and increasing affordability, we just want to point out in this case that the houses being proposed do not fall into the affordable housing category. They are designed at 3000 square feet and will likely go onto the retail market at \$1.6 to 1.8 million each.

There are still a significant number of residents in our community opposed to this development as the house sizes are incompatible with the existing neighbourhood and there are concerns for the environmental impacts on Falaise Park. We are concerned that approval will set a precedent for future developments that will lead to further losses of Saanich's urban forest.

The FCA accepts that the developer and Saanich have made some effort to address community concerns, but more could have been done.

Presented by: Stuart Macpherson

President