

# Hamilton committee of adjustment denies variance for east Mountain garage conversion

Issue headed for Local Planning Appeal Tribunal

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Mon., March 21, 2022 |  2 min. read

Chalk one up for the residents in the Highview community on the east Mountain.

The city's [Committee of Adjustment](#) (COA) has denied a parking variance that would enable the owner of 38 Rendell Boulevard to convert the garage on the site into a residential housing unit.

Committee members voted 9-0 on March 17 against the proposed reduction of onsite parking from three to two spaces following about 30 minutes of online presentations and discussion.

Some committee members suggested the garage conversion would be an over intensification of the property.

The home is owned by Burlington residents Tetyana Holoshchuk and her husband Alex Razborshchuk who are also looking to add an apartment within the home.

Holoshchuk's name appears on COA documents.

"I'm extremely disappointed," said Razborshchuk. "I believe the meeting that was supposed to be about a parking variance, a very simple question, turned into a heated discussion about housing in Hamilton."

Razborshchuk's agent Ken Bekendam said they will be appealing the matter to the provincial Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT).

"(City) planning staff supported the application," Bekendam said. "The lack of understanding around (the city's secondary dwelling unit bylaw passed last April) was on full display."

Many Highview residents believe the garage conversion will lead to less privacy, less green space, more on-street parking, ruin the aesthetics of the neighbourhood that is dominated by single-family homes and lead to more garage conversions in the area.

A petition with more than 100 signatures opposed to the plan was filed with the committee.

Longtime area resident Paul Kurpe, who spoke to the committee, was pleased with the group's decision but disappointed the matter is going to LPAT.

"If he (the property owner) appeals, there's going to be a stronger pushback than ever; this is only going to grow," Kurpe said. "Given the community pushback, I was hoping he'd be a gentleman and retract his application."

Downtown architect Bill Curran spoke to the committee in favour of the conversion, noting it provides the kind of "gentle density" Hamilton needs rather than greenfield development.

"It's the kind of project we should be doing and will be doing in all our neighbourhoods," Curran said.

East Mountain Coun. Tom Jackson, who spoke to the committee in support of the neighbours, applauded the committee's decision.

"I'm extremely pleased that the Committee of Adjustment took into seriously account community voices in deliberating and reaching their decision," Jackson said.

The councillor said he would like to see the secondary unit dwelling bylaw revisited by city council.

Jackson voted against the bylaw last spring.