

February 15, 2019

City of Bainbridge Island
Planning Department
280 Madison Avenue N
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

Re: Winslow Hotel Project

To: Olivia Sontag, Planner

A small scale unique hotel with character would be welcomed in the community with minimal impact on the environment and residential neighbors. This project does not do as such.

Winslow has been described as a “Village” welcoming residents and tourists alike to its walkable shops and restaurants. The scale of this Hotel, both building size and amenities, is too large for the small town feel of Winslow. The proposed amenities are those found in large scale Resorts. The Hotel building size is typically built in a large downtown city. This proposed building will change the concept for small town Winslow.

This letter includes my comments for the proposed 75 unit hotel on Winslow Way W.

STATE ENVIRONMENT POLICY ACT (SEPA)

As part of the building process, I understand the City needs to address SEPA requirements related to water, sewer, air, and other environmental impacts. The Hotel plan needs to address the environmental impact for its building since there will be a large demand on resources that will be unsustainable.

WATER AND SEWER

Currently the Health Department is evaluating the Hotel plan and it should be scrutinized carefully for water and sewer issues.

The Hotel plans include a collection of rain water to supply the needs of the building. With 75 rooms, a reflection pool, restaurant, banquet room festivities, spa, music venue, and coffee bar, there would not nearly be enough for guests to shower or bathe, flush toilets, have drinking water or for staff to wash dishes, clean rooms and maintain the building, or refill a reflection pool.

Although the Hotel wants to drill into the aquifer as a backup plan for water to meet its needs, I understand the Winslow property owners cannot do the same on their property. The City should not allow an exception for the Hotel owner to drill into the aquifer when 1) residents are not allowed to do this, and 2) there are requirements for SEPA and its effect on the environment.

The Hotel plans to have a “living machine” for septic effluent. The City should closely inspect this type of system already installed at IslandWood to know its pros and cons. Isn't this really a septic system that is not allowed in Winslow? I understand that there are strong offensive odors with a living machine that would affect surrounding homes and businesses.

PARKING

The parking study shows 179 spaces needed for capacity. A building this large needs to have parking not only for the hotel guests, but event guests, day use spa, restaurant, and employees. It is stated in the plan that there is not enough parking which MAY be mitigated by leasing space with other businesses and providing a shuttle. This same concept was promised with the building of Bainbridge Pavilion (home to our local movie theater and restaurants). I understand there were no parking leases that occurred after it was built. And to use parking for surrounding buildings would take away from the small businesses, retail and restaurants that rely on parking for their use.

The residential neighborhoods will ultimately become the parking spaces for the Hotel. The surrounding residential homes will not have parking for their own use and their own guests. Street parking is limited to 2 to 3 hours on Winslow Way for people to shop and use the restaurants; not to be used for overnight hotel parking.

GUEST SAFETY

The Fire Department is in processing of reviewing the Hotel plans. The initial pre application conference from 2017 (PLN 50880) had described a 60 room hotel and showed the Fire Department comments for what appears to be a one-way U shaped driveway in the drawings. This permit has since expired. The current driveway configuration stops in the back of the Hotel not allowing a fire truck to turn around effectively. Should there be a fire at the building, fire fighters need to be able to bring their large engines into an area and attack a fire from all sides of a building. The current plan does not support this.

In addition, large garbage trucks will either need to back up onto Winslow Way or make a 3 point turn to leave after pickup. Again, not enough room if the driveway stops at the back of the Hotel.

NOISE, ODOR AND GROUNDS LIGHTING ISSUES

As described earlier, there will be odor from the “living machine” septic system.

A large scale restaurant is planned in the building and will be able to cook for large wedding groups. Winslow has restaurants that produce odors for their cooking but their grills do not cook > 100 steaks at a time for large group functions. This will cause unpleasant, lingering cooking smells throughout the area.

Although garbage pickup is planned to happen several times per week to reduce garbage odors, there is still the noise issue of restaurant recycling throwing away bottles in the night after a large event party, as well as garbage trucks constantly backing up after pick up.

For the quiet neighborhood that we have, there is an issue regarding party crowds that will be using the facility and increase the noise level at night. This was quite a problem when 122 Winslow restaurant was open on this location, with no consequences.

The planned outdoor amphitheater is not suppose to have amplified music, but will be used as a wedding venue. In order to hear vows, or play music for the ceremony, will this still be the case? Or will the neighbors have to hear every wedding that will occur?

A Hotel of this scale will need lighting in and around the building. The City should look at ways to reduce light "pollution". Other cities use low downward lights so the night sky is still visible for others to enjoy.

REQUEST TO RESCHEDULE THE APRIL 25 PUBLIC MEETING

A Public Meeting is scheduled by the City for April 25 at 10 am. I request to have the meeting postponed to allow enough time for further analysis of the Hotel plan.

In conclusion, I invite the Planning Board to walk the property to view the surrounding homes, businesses, and condos and reflect on how a project this size is not consistent with the neighborhood or the Village of Winslow.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Pons
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Bainbridge Island