

DALHOUSIE REZONING APPLICATION - COMMENTS  
ON STAFF REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

by A. A. CLUNNEY.

1. In the Staff Report there is little mention of the reason for the rezoning recommended by the Marshall & Merrett "Campus Development Plan". The application is based on the recommendation of the architects that in order to protect Dalhousie from the possibility of large apartment buildings being constructed in the area which will be needed for expansion, there must be protective rezoning. Failure to obtain such rezoning gives rise to the danger that Dalhousie may be forced to do without certain important areas of land or, alternatively, be forced to pay enormous prices in order to obtain the land it requires. Already there are several large apartment buildings not far removed from the campus, and if a similar type of building were erected in the area for which rezoning is requested, it would seriously hamper the development programme of the University.

2. The question of possible loss of tax revenue by the City as a result of the expansion of Dalhousie seems to have little relevance to the rezoning application, although a great deal is said in the Staff Report on this question. Conceivably, Dalhousie could purchase all of the land which is shown by the Marshall & Merrett Plan to be required for further expansion without any rezoning. Whether the City would feel it had to take some kind of action in order to prevent Dalhousie from acquiring such a large block of nontaxable land is a question

which has to be decided apart from the present rezoning application.

3. The rezoning of the areas in question does not necessarily mean that these areas are forever lost for tax assessment purposes. If the areas are rezoned, then there is no loss in tax revenue until the properties themselves are acquired by the University and are used for University purposes and not for rental purposes. It is also possible that some portions of the area in question may not be needed or, alternatively, may not be suitable for University building purposes and would remain under private ownership. In any event, rezoning of the area does not mean that the City has taken a step which cannot be retraced at a later time should some part of the area not be required by Dalhousie. The zoning could always be changed back again to its present type if there are sufficient grounds for doing so.

4. Staff refers to the Marshall & Merrett Plan as being of a tentative nature and cites as an example the change in location of the Law School which is now being constructed. The inference is made that the Plan cannot be relied upon as accurately establishing the location of the University buildings which will be required in the next 15 years. It is true that the Plan is a suggested scheme of expansion, and there must necessarily be revisions and changes in location of various buildings. However, this does not invalidate the fundamental point of the area of land which the University will need in order to properly

expand its facilities through the year 1980. The Plan states that the estimates made may be conservative in respect to land requirements, and this is borne out by the increase in enrollment at the University over the past two years. The Plan bases its calculations on the estimates of student enrollment, which are attached to the Plan and were prepared by the University. This estimate shows a student body of between 3300 and 3400 for the year 1965-66, and a recent indication is that the enrollment for the coming year may hit the 4000 mark. Assuming that student enrollment is increasing at a faster rate than was estimated, it is clear that the University's land requirements will probably exceed the amount indicated in the Plan by 1980.

5. The Plan is criticized by Staff from the point of view of design and the lack of grouping of buildings. As the Plan only establishes guide lines, it would seem that the actual grouping of various buildings could not be established, as this is something which may depend on such factors as future academic developments, student interest in different disciplines, availability of funds, etc.

6. Staff's approach seems to be to confine rezoning to as small an area as possible, based on the fact that the University's development plans have not been finalized in exact detail and the Marshall & Merrett Plan indicates the requirement of certain buildings which may not be necessary until close to 1980. The present area zoned for University use is 53 acres. To provide space for expected growth, the Plan indicates that the

physical plant should be doubled within the next five years and tripled in the next 15 to 20 years. It is clear that it is a reasonable assumption to expect the University will require a substantial amount of additional land to carry out its expansion programme. The area included in the application for rezoning is roughly one half of the total amount recommended by the Plan for zoning protection. The University has cut in half the recommendation of Marshall & Merrett in order to keep its request to a minimum which is consistent with its requirements of the next few years. Staff only recommended rezoning for approximately one half of the area requested, which would result in zoning protection for the University of only one quarter of the land area recommended by the Plan. Surely this is an unrealistic approach to the obvious requirements of the University in acquiring additional land for expansion.

#### COMMENTS ON STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Staff recommends rezoning to "Park and Institutional" of land on the west side of LeMarchant Street. This is as requested.
2. Staff recommends extension of the "Park and Institutional" area on the north and south sides of University Avenue to a total of 200 feet. The rezoning requested was an increase of 100 feet on the south side of University Avenue and an increase of 275 feet on the north side of University Avenue.

3. Staff recommends against rezoning on the north side of College Street because the Marshall and Merrett Plan indicates these areas will be used for research institutes, which can be established under the existing zoning. The reason given by Staff misses the point for rezoning, which is to protect the area from the construction of large apartment buildings which will either prevent or greatly hinder the University in obtaining this area. It is a specious argument to say that the research institutes could be established under the existing zoning, since this is true of the whole area which Marshall & Merrett recommend for rezoning. Under R-3 zoning, institutes may be established and the University could complete its entire expansion programme without any change in zoning should there be no difficulty in obtaining the land necessary.

4. Staff recommends against rezoning of the area between LeMarchant and Seymour Streets north of the present "Park and Institutional" strip because the Marshall & Merrett Plan indicates this would not be needed until a later stage of the development and because the construction of new residence facilities on this land as suggested by the Plan requires further study and surveys. It appears that enrollment is increasing faster than estimated by the University when the Plan was prepared, and this indicates the more immediate need of expansion of residence facilities. Also, the fact that the Plan suggests further study be given the residence question is no argument for delaying the rezoning which is necessary to protect the land from the difficulties which have already been mentioned should apartment buildings be

established in the area.

5. Staff suggests that research facilities and sports grounds might be located outside the Studley-Carleton area. This is a general criticism of the Marshall & Merrett Plan and has no relevance to the areas for which rezoning is requested, with the exception of the area on the north side of College Street, which has already been discussed.

6. Staff says that densities could be increased and hence the land requirement would be lessened. It is certainly not to the advantage of the University to purchase land beyond what is reasonably necessary to carry out its expansion programme. Dalhousie is very much concerned to keep its land requirements at a minimum which is consistent with the expansion of its facilities which will be required in the next 15 years. The awareness of the University in this respect is illustrated by the present application, which requests rezoning for about one half of the area recommended by the Plan.

7. Staff says that if the rezoning, as requested, is granted, then the question of expropriation should be dealt with in order to determine whether the City or the Province will expropriate on behalf of the University should this be necessary. Dalhousie has bought a large number of properties in the area for which rezoning was requested and at this point is not bringing forward the question of expropriation. However, it may be that the City will have to decide this matter, but it is submitted that the granting of the application <sup>need</sup> ~~should~~ not be tied in with this question.