Neighbour questions integrity of 1-2-3 proposal

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Roger Lee is growing increasingly alarmed at apparent misconceptions and misinformation surrounding the proposed plans for 123 King St. E. in Colborne.

Mr. Lee and his wife Margaret run a bed and breakfast adjacent to the "1-2-3 House" (so named because it is at 123 King Street East in Colborne) owned by Kevin and Heather O'Gorman.

Mr. Lee has stated repeatedly that he would like something positive to happen to the property. When he purchased his home in the late eighties the 123 house was an institution caring for handicapped adults. It closed and has remained empty for most of the past several years.

The O'Gormans purchased the property and have plans to turn it into a 29-unit residence for seniors. They have been seeking permission from Cramahe Township council to allow self-contained residences with an average size of 220 square feet. They wish to keep the current "institutional" zoning and add "residential". This would allow them a wider variety of options should the seniors residence concept fail.

Mr. Lee first expressed his concerns to council in a letter dated August 20. He was critical of council for not notifying him and other area residents that the O'Gormans were seeking to add a zoning designation, not change it.

The request by the O'Gormans to have dual zoning suggested to Mr. Lee that they were not confident of the viability of their plan. The neighbour also criticized elements of the plan. The O'Gormans addressed some of these questions for council at its Sept. 2 meeting.

At the same time they presented Council with a petition with the names of people that supported their project. Mr. Lee disagrees with the total that was printed in last week's *Chronicle*. He has studied the petitions and come up with some information that he finds distressing. There are

not 155 names on the petitions. There are 137. Of these 137, there were 25 who signed two questions on separate sheets and were counted twice.

That brings the number down to 112. Of this lot there were a handful that gave no address and a similar number who's names could not be read.

He claims to have broken the numbers down further. Forty-six people and one numbered company are within the area requiring official notification by the township of a proposed zoning change. Mr. Lee says that he can find only six of these names on petitions.

A quick survey of the petitions in the municipal office revealed most of the signees lived on Burnham, Streamside, Durham, Church Streets and Thornlea Ave. Twelve names with Streamside addresses were found in the pile of petitions. Whether these were within the notification zone was not confirmed. There was also no way of knowing when one person signed whether that person was signing for all members of the family.

Regardless, it does give some credence to Mr. Lee's claim that the project lacks support from the residents nearby. It was also confirmed that at least two people from outside the village gave the wrong address when they signed.

He also suggested that the questions asked were not balanced. They asked if the people supported the project and the allocation of sewage disposal. The size of the apartments was not mentioned in the petition.

The other thing that rankles the neighbour is that the petition failed to mention that the O'Gormans want to 'tailor-make zoning'. As a taxpayer he feels it's not council's duty to protect the O'Gorman investment by custom making a bylaw to suit.

These perceived incongruities have made Mr. Lee somewhat skeptical of the O'Gorman plans. Conversations with Kevin over the fence have always been cordial but he has been hearing the word 'group home' more and more.

And that leads back to Mr. Lee's response to Kevin's questions about support for the project. Mr. Lee says he will not oppose the O'Gormans in principle. But if he finds anything that affects the quality of his life or the value of his property he will oppose them.