

# TANTRAMAR GAS BAR (2012) LTD.

4 Cattail Ridge  
Sackville, NB  
E4L 3S1

February 22, 2016

Mayor & Council  
Town of Sackville

We are writing to request an exception or an amendment to the permitted uses under the Highway Commercial Zoning Bylaw 212. The definition of Restaurant within this bylaw is as follows:

RESTAURANT, means a building where food is prepared and served for public consumption within the building or as takeout **but does not include a drive-thru restaurant.**

As owners of Tantramar Gas Bar (2012) Ltd., we would like to add a Robin's Donuts to our existing business which would include a drive thru window. As noted above, the current bylaw excludes a drive-thru restaurant. Our understanding is that drive-thrus were removed from this zoning in 2001 (confirmed by Lori Bickford, Tantramar Planning) due to emissions from idling cars and the effect on our environment and traffic congestion near exit 504.

## **BENEFITS OF DRIVE-THRUS:**

Drive-thrus are popular for the following reasons:

- Perceived as saving time to customers
- Provides an alternative for people with disabilities
- More convenient for drivers – allowing them to stay in their vehicles
- Provides an alternative for people with small children without the need for caregivers with children to leave the vehicle
- Provides an alternative for pet owners not wishing to leave their pet unattended in the vehicle while visiting a restaurant
- Perceived as a safer option at night by women and senior customers

## **EMISSIONS FROM IDLING CARS:**

There are many reasons why cars idle (not just sitting in a drive thru):

- People sit in their cars to listen to the radio
- Waiting for someone
- Talking to someone outside of the car
- Running a quick errand
- Parking illegally
- Keeping the heat or air conditioning on
- Warming up a vehicle in the driveway (many have car starters)
- Dropping off or picking up a child at school/daycare (Kiss and Drop at Salem)

- Dropping off or picking up a passenger at work, mall, or any other destination
- Waiting for a train

Today, as compared to 5-10 years ago, manufacturers have to meet strict government regulations mandating more fuel efficient, cleaner burning vehicles resulting in far less emissions.

## **BACKGROUND**

Our current business is locally owned and operated and is predominantly gas and tobacco sales with a large customer base from Nova Scotia. Over the last number of years, a significant number of our customers have travelled from NS to NB due to the combined savings on their tobacco and fuel.

In October 2014, a new competitor opened in Dorchester offering lower fuel prices drawing some of our customers their way. Also, in the 2015/16 Provincial budget there was a 2 cent fuel tax imposed which brought the price of NB fuel very close to that in NS. With the combination of increased competition and increased fuel prices, we started to see a decline in fuel sales. Our response was a Jeep Giveaway contest to help maintain our existing fuel levels (at a cost of \$26,000 plus). We also negotiated our propane prices with a new supplier so we could offer affordable prices to local residents and attempt to attract new business. It was also an added product for our NS customers who could "one stop shop" by buying their tobacco, gas and propane.

Up until the 2016/17 budget, tobacco was \$13.04 cheaper at our store than in NS. In the current budget, an additional tobacco tax of \$6.52 per carton was imposed, therefore reducing the price difference between NS and NB. Another \$6.52 increase has been announced for the 2017/18 budget, this will eliminate our price difference and we expect we will see a major drop in NS traffic. At that point, the only offering we will have to save cost is our propane.

On top of the 2 cent fuel tax added last year, the \$6.52 tobacco tax in the current year and the \$6.52 tobacco tax next year, the NB government is also increasing HST by 2% in July 2016 further hindering our ability to compete with NS where we have drawn a significant number of customers.

## **PROPOSAL**

Our response to this challenge is to diversify so we aren't depending solely on tobacco and gas which will be negatively impacted by the noted changes. We feel that a Robin's will add to our product offering; drawing customers off the highway and helping us maintain our current fuel volumes while we transition from a tobacco and gas store to a "one stop shop". We will also be offering a drive thru for the convenience of the East end Sackville residents.

We have researched the Robin's franchise and have had other gas stations state that if it wasn't for adding the Robin's product line to their business, they would have been forced to

shut their doors. This is what we are trying to avoid. We currently employ 6 full time staff and 3 part time staff. We expect the addition of this business will provide local jobs for up to 5 Sackville residents; our contribution to addressing the challenging Sackville job market which has suffered the loss of several businesses over the last few years. We considered proceeding with the Robin's without the drive-thru but Robin's will not entertain this option as their market research indicates that it will not work without one. Speaking with Robin's headquarters, who have over 200 locations across the country, they have never been in a situation where the municipality doesn't allow a drive-thru.

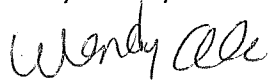
Sackville has two other drive-thrus and the gas stations in that area (not locally owned) have a competitive advantage. They offer a "one stop shop" service where customers exit the highway, to purchase gas, lunch and/or coffee. We are merely trying to level the playing field. In addition, an option on Exit 506 will help draw customers off the highway and residents in that area, alleviating traffic congestion on exit 504. At the time this by-law was amended, there were 3 drive-thrus in existence (all on exit 504).

A site plan is attached showing the proposed drive-thru location (which will be clearly marked with signage), the queue is over 235ft and therefore will hold approx 16 vehicles; therefore, no traffic congestion on Robson Avenue. We will also be adding an area with 3-4 picnic tables where our customers can enjoy their lunch.

We hope that you will consider an exception or an amendment to the existing bylaw to allow us to proceed with our business plan and the associated local jobs. The worst case scenario is the loss of another local business, and the associated employment, tax base and reduction in local economy stimulation.

We were moving forward for a May 2016 opening but are at a standstill until we can resolve this issue.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Kelly & Wendy Alder

Owners, Tantramar Gas Bar (2012) Ltd.

877m  
Sewer Easement  
Town of Sackville  
#297725  
Vol. 291  
Pg. 948

81

19.19  
Green space  
with 3-4  
picnic tables

30.582  
PARKING  
x6

30ft  
50ft

PUMPS

PUMPS

PUMPS

PARKING  
x4

Tank Island  
PARKING  
x3

Existing 5m Wide Public Utility Easement

53.289

14' 27" 24"

5.83

Avenue

Filed # 5072

plan