

NDP Caucus News

For Immediate Release

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O’Leary Calls for Greater Public Transparency on Allderdice Development in Letter to Council

NDP MHA for St. John’s East-Quidi Vidi, Sheilagh O’Leary, wrote to St. John’s City Council on Monday calling for full transparency with the residents of St. John’s around the development of the former Allderdice property.

O’Leary wrote the correspondence after a number of constituents raised concerns about the proposed development, which was first reported by *AllNewfoundlandLabrador*. As the MHA for the area and former St. John’s Deputy Mayor, she says that given the level of public interest and unanswered questions, it is critical that residents are given a meaningful opportunity to voice their concerns directly to council.

“I understand that a petition with more than 4,500 signatures will be tabled at [today’s] meeting. This level of public response is both significant and telling,” O’Leary wrote. “While holding a public meeting may be discretionary, I strongly and respectfully urge Council to provide that opportunity and to engage residents in open, transparent dialogue.”

O’Leary emphasized the importance of preserving the unique heritage of The Battery, noting that this development has broader implications for our shared heritage, our city’s identity, and its global tourism profile. She added that one of the primary concerns raised by residents is whether the proposed design will align with and respect the area’s existing heritage architecture – a style that is showcased in almost all NL Tourism ads.

“In the spirit of accountability and public trust, it is critical to recognize that The Battery is among the most iconic historic areas in our city. Decisions of this magnitude cannot be viewed narrowly as matters affecting only a single parcel of land or its immediate surroundings,” O’Leary wrote. “This area represents the gateway to the oldest cities in North America – one that we proudly promote on the world stage. The consequences of this proposal will extend far beyond the property line.”

“I also recognize that the responsibility for this decision now rests with you. I urge you to proceed with extreme caution. This is not a typical development scenario, nor is it comparable to those in suburban neighbourhoods. The sensitivity, visibility, and long-term implications of this site demand a higher level of scrutiny and care.”

A copy of the letter is attached.

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