

Plans for Norval need more study, residents say

By **CYNTHIA GAMBLE**
Staff Writer

About 50 Norval residents listened as 11 of their neighbours aired their views on the draft Secondary Plan, Official Plan and Zoning bylaw amendments concerning their hamlet at a public meeting recently.

The majority of the commenters said it's too soon to approve the draft documents as more work needs to be done to address heritage homes, traffic congestion and safety, floodplain mapping concerns, rezoning of a residential neighbourhood to a combined office/residential, the size of commercial expansion, the limited permitted uses on commercial lots, the lack of longtime community groups on the Secondary Plan steering committee and the importance of tourism to the village.

Residents still have time to present written comments to the Town's planning staff. Deadline for submission is December 20. For details on the draft policy go to <http://haltonhills.ca/calendars/2013/PDS-2013-0088.pdf>

Kathy Gastle, president of the Norval Community Association (NCA) reiterated comments she made a month ago at a Halton Hills council meeting calling the draft premature. She said Norval is

under siege by the surrounding housing development in Brampton and Georgetown, the proposed slate quarry north of the village and new major highways. Gastle said Norval's heritage homes should be on the Town's heritage register and protected before the Secondary Plan is approved.

The NCA recently met with Heritage Halton Hills (HHH) to bump some "high risk" Norval buildings into Phase 3 of the Heritage Register, rather than Phase 4 as was originally scheduled, said Councilor Moya Johnson, chair of HHH.

Planning Director John Linhardt said the Planning Department sees the Heritage Register program as "a separate and distinct program but complementary to the Secondary Plan Review."

Gastle said the Secondary Plan review is incomplete in several areas and hope that these issues will be addressed with the NCA before council approval. Gastle noted that no member of the Norval Community Association executive, Norval Women's Institute or Norval Heritage Society were on the Secondary Plan's Steering Committee.

In reply to concerns over the changing of zoning of the King, Adamson and Green Sts. neighbourhood to Office/Residential, which will allow professional offices in the homes, Town consultant

Lorelei Jones said the re-zoning reduces the number of commercial uses in the area, thus giving the homeowners more protection.

Bob Crawford, president of the Norval Heritage Society, said tourism is a viable business in the hamlet, but does not get enough support from the Town.

Two residents gave lukewarm support to the draft plan, with resident Ken Robinson saying "It may not be 100 per cent perfect but it's a start", and Rachel Banks adding, "it's going in the right direction." Robinson would like more focus on traffic issues while Banks questioned the expanded changes to the floodplain.

Jones replied the floodplain has not changed, only the mapping, done by the Credit Valley Conservation.

Another speaker, a real estate rep trying to sell a Norval automotive business, said its value has dropped by \$250,000 due to the restrictive uses permitted.

Linhardt, however, pointed out the draft plan cites that property specifically and actually allows more uses on the property than previously.

Jones and the Town's planners will take residents' concerns into consideration before they bring a final draft document back to council for approval in the new year.



Science can be fun

Gardiner Public School Grade 5 students (from left) Jesse Trudeau, Austin Hollett and Hunter McNair, learned about protecting and purifying water recently. As an experiment, they polluted it with sand, wood shavings and dye, then strained it, filtered it and treated it with charcoal to make it clean again. The program was sponsored by BASF Canada and Earth Rangers, who are working together to bring Kids' Lab, a series of hands-on chemistry workshops developed by BASF for students in Grades 4-6 to 30 classrooms across the GTA this fall.

Photo by Ted Brown

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