

# Mayor hints at promises by the Province on some of Merton lands

continued from p.1

“We have learned many lessons about life and how to prepare for it. We’ve been taught to take care of and preserve the things that are most important. We’ve been taught to stand up for what we believe in and to do what’s right,” said student Ryan Schoonderwoerd.

Students urged council to protect the Merton lands and Oakville’s green space for the future.

They noted how the Merton lands are a natural ecosystem for them to learn and explore the environment. They’re worried about the potential impact its development could have on them, as well as the animals that make the area home.

“Green space is important to kids these days because of the fact we need to maintain a healthy lifestyle,” said Jordan Hoac, noting how youths bike, walk and take class trips in the ravines — activities that maintain healthy lifestyles.

The students presented a video of other students’ opinions, which was met with applause.

Other speakers included the Fourteen Mile Creek Residents’ Association, Dr. Pedro Pereyra, who has studied the creek extensively since 1998, Oakvillegreen Conservation Association, Deerfield Members’ Association, Deerfield Golf Club’s planning consultant and others, who continue to express concern about Town staff’s preferred draft plan that outlines the privately-owned Saw-Whet lands, located in the northern section of the Merton Lands study area, as a potential for low- and medium-density residential.

Fourteen Mile Creek Residents’ Association President Scott Leduc said the Saw-Whet lands



Julia Bayer's Grade 7 class at West Oak Public School appeared before Town council Monday night during debate on the future of the Merton lands. | photo by Keri Schoonderwoerd - special to the Beaver

are important not only to golfers but as a buffer protecting the creek and its wildlife.

Residents are unhappy with a proposed small-scale retail plaza near Upper Middle Road West as they believe it to be an environmentally-sensitive area.

Oakvillegreen Conservation Association President Karen Brock said the Merton lands are a rich habitat for a multitude of wildlife and plant species that is a “rare find” in urban areas.

“Invade and hardscape and we can guarantee that despite mitigation, humans will compromise this ecosystem,” she said, critical of techni-

cal studies done by developers and landowners that don’t address issues such as hydrology.

If Saw-Whet is developed, a number of storm-water outlets will be needed, which will “damage the already fragile eroding banks,” she said.

“There is absolutely no question in my mind this is one of the last pristine tracks of lands in Oakville,” she said, adding that while golf courses aren’t perfect neighbours, “clearly permeable surfaces have acted as natural buffers that explain the pristine condition of this stretch of Fourteen Mile Creek.”

Mayor Rob Burton told the crowd the pro-

vincial government is committed to not selling the property it owns within the Merton lands for development.

More details are expected in the coming days, Burton said.

He noted the Town’s efforts to get public land near Fourteen Mile Creek, between Upper Middle Road and the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW), added to the Ontario Greenbelt. The application has been endorsed by Halton regional council.

Burton also put forward a motion outlining what he believes are important steps that will enable protection of all the Merton lands.

“All members of this council and our planning staff share a passionate desire to protect and preserve green space,” he said. “Together, we have saved more than 500 sq.-km. of green space in the last eight years. We don’t believe the job is done.”

The steps, which were passed unanimously, directs staff to gather more information on environmental work that still needs to be done by the landowners and ask the Town’s peer reviewers to undertake further analysis on water balance, the need to preserve the Fourteen Mile Creek’s recharge ability and the analysis of certain species and their critical habitat.

Staffers have also been asked to explore the natural heritage functions of the golf course and examine the new Provincial Policy Statements (PPS) that govern all planning decisions and how they can be applied to the Merton lands.

A staff report will go to council June 9.

EVERY PERSON HAS A STORY TO TELL.

THANKS TO YOU IT CAN BE TOLD.

At Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, talented physicians like Dr. Mangesh Inamdar help care for patients in need of urgent care every day. Their expertise plus the life-saving equipment you help fund make it possible for their stories to continue.

Each and every year, our hospital needs hundreds of pieces of new equipment that will improve the lives of all of us here in Oakville. Every piece is critical and every piece needs to be funded by our community. It all starts here – with your help.

Please call 905.338.4642 to share your story or make a donation.

  
Oakville  
Hospital  
Foundation  
[www.oakvillehospitalfoundation.com](http://www.oakvillehospitalfoundation.com)



DR. MANGESH INAMDAR  
OTMH PHYSICIAN