

The ROCKWOOD Miller

Development densities 'scare' Guelph/Eramosa politician

A Rockwood developer may not be able to "cram" as many houses as it would like into a proposed subdivision on the eastern edge of Rockwood, if several Guelph/Eramosa politicians have their way.

Harris Street Developments Inc., has filed a rezoning application with the Township to increase density to allow a total of 259 housing units – 130 single family houses, a condominium with 42 cluster townhouses and 87 detached condos – on land behind Rockwood Ridge. The developer has also filed necessary planning applications with Wellington County.

Following a briefing to Township Council by planning staff last Monday, Councillor Corey Woods said he has multiple problems and multiple questions.

"...it looks like you want to cram as many house in there as possible, you know, to fit as many people in there as

possible," Woods said, adding while the maximum lot coverage is supposed to be 35 per cent, this development is as high as 60 per cent for the condominiums.

Woods said he doesn't see justification in the proposal, other than it will mean more money for the developer, and he is worried that big houses on little lots will mean no backyards for kids to play.

Councillor Doug Breen said just because the province and its Places to Grow legislation calls for increased density, they don't have to approve something that will be "considerably different from anything we've built before." He said problems related to increased density could "haunt" him for the next 20 years as ratepayers complain about things like on-street parking. Breen suggested the developer come back with a "more reasonable" plan because the lot sizes and coverage numbers

proposed are "fairly obscene," and he finds the proposal "kind of scary."

Planner Lana Phillips cautioned it was unfair to look at the plans just based on the density, noting some municipalities have no rules for lot coverage, yet still have good development.

Bruce Donaldson, agent for the developer, noted that Rockwood's Riverwalk townhouse development has 55 per cent density coverage and be "lovely" and "beautiful."

Mayor Chris White said this development is the "most significant" application Council will deal with in this term of office, and a lot of people are already concerned about increased traffic, density and other issues.

"It looks like the numbers are quite scary and this is going to be – there is a vast amount of interest in this..." White said.

The rezoning application is being circulated to commenting agencies, and once those comments are in, a planning report will be prepared for Council which will schedule a public meeting.



PROPOSED HOUSING: This sketch shows what the single detached houses proposed for a subdivision on Harris Street would look like. One Guelph/Eramosa politician accused the developer of trying to "cram" in as many houses as possible into the development. –Submitted drawing

Sidewalk improvement for Rockwood

Rockwood will have continuous sidewalks from one end of the village to the other – work to be done as part of the Ministry of Transportation's (MTO) reconstruction of Highway 7, slated for this summer.

Guelph/Eramosa Township Council recently approved the MTO sidewalk plan for 4,500-metres of continuous sidewalks (new or existing) on both sides of the highway from the intersection of Fall and Alma Streets to the intersection of Dunbar / MacLellan Streets and Highway 7.

The MTO will pay for areas of sidewalk that need to be replaced because of the highway project. In areas where there are existing paved shoulders, the Township

will pick up the incremental cost to build an actual concrete asphalt sidewalk, instead of reconstructing the paved shoulder. The Township will pay for sidewalks in areas where there is no paved shoulder or sidewalk.

Guelph/Eramosa Township Mayor Chris White the proposed \$234,934 cost to the Township is \$150,000 less than if they had to repair or replace the sidewalks along Highway 7 at the traditional cost of \$85 per metre.

"If ever there was a time to proceed with the sidewalks this is it, when the MTO rips up the road," White said recently, adding sidewalks that won't be affected by road construction will remain as is. If there's asphalt sidewalk that the Township wants to turn into a proper concrete sidewalk, or fill in gaps, then the MTO and Township will share the cost.

"A good example is in front of Home Hardware

where there really is no defined driveway and really no defined walking path...so what we'd do is put in proposed (concrete) sidewalks with proper entrances into the hardware parking lot, so its safer and more defined," White said.

Although the MTO's Highway 7 reconstruction study team said in a pre-Christmas letter to affected residents that traffic volumes do not warrant either a traffic signal or pedestrian crossing of Highway 7, White said the Township does not see those issues as dead.

"In my mind, they are still on the table. I would still, even with the sidewalks, like to see a traffic light or crosswalk," White said.

The MTO said once it had the Township's support for the sidewalk plan, it would prepare a cost-sharing agreement. White said once that happens, they would hold another public meeting.

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Yoga

in Rockwood

Starting week of January 17, 2011

Monday - 6:45 to 8:00pm

Intermediate with Caroline

Tuesday - 9:30 to 10:45am

Beginner/Intermediate with Caroline

Wednesday - 5:00 to 6:30pm

- 7:00 to 8:30pm

Beginner/Intermediate with Lorri

Thursday - 9:30 to 11:00am

Gentle with Lorri

10 Week Session \$135

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Caroline 519.856.0070 or
caroline06ca@yahoo.com

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