

Council unanimously supports Sixth Line development plan

By **CYNTHIA GAMBLE**
Staff Writer

Despite the continuing protests of Sixth Line residents, Halton Hills council unanimously greenlighted a 20-lot rural estate subdivision at Monday's council meeting.

Esquesing Development Ltd. had made its first application to build a 45-home estate on 117 acres near the residential enclave on Sixth Line, north of 17 Sideroad Road, in 1975. But through the years reduced the number of homes to its current 20. A remnant lot adjacent to the site would allow a 21st home, but that is not part of this application.

Three Sixth Line residents, Kevin Lake, David Monroe and Dave Betchley, spoke again to council in front of a neighbourhood-packed public gallery, reiterating their concerns with the proposed development.

They include: the potential safety issue posed by the proposed location of the subdivision entrance drive, the impact of well water in the area, the loss of rural character, the loss of tree canopy, possible soil contamination on the land previously used as a gravel pit, the potential for development on the remnant lot, construction in a Greenbelt area, lack of public notification, and repeated extensions of deadlines given to the developer.

"The residents of Sixth Line receive no benefit from this proposal, only risk and negative impact on our rural way of life," said Lake. "This is the only benefit that we can assume the Town... is receiving in this transaction: additional tax revenue in exchange for a portion of lands that currently fall within the Greenbelt policy."

Initially, the residents had come to council in May and June seeking a compromise, but by July had opposed the project telling council they have hired Toronto firm Miller Thomson to take it to the Ontario Municipal Board.

"We will not go away, we will not be bullied," said Monroe.

During the last two months council had

tried to mediate a solution between the residents and the developer, and even hired its own traffic consultant to peer review the location of the subdivision's entrance.

But frustration with the residents' increasing intransigence, and their subtle—and sometimes not so subtle— suggestions that council would forego residents' safety and their own integrity in favour of developer cash, created an unanimous front.



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"We got to feel as we were going along as we working towards arriving at a solution, as we got towards the finish line, the finish line kept moving. And that's the part I'm having trouble with," said Ward 2 Councillor Bryan Lewis. "At what point do we go forward? Not sacrificing safety, that has been the game plan of mine from number one...I've had people yell at me, call me all kinds of names but I tell you I take exception to the integrity challenge that I have listened

to on two occasions here."

He said safety is paramount to all councillors.

The Town's traffic consultant, Gene Chartier of Hatch Mott and MacDonald advised council that the subdivision's entrance is now located in the best possible spot due to environmental constraints.

"As much as one would like to fight city hall... we recognize when you have a provincially significant wetland and top of bank restrictions, those are firm restrictions that one is not able to compromise," said Chartier, who met with the residents July 4.

The solicitor for Esquesing Developments, Bert Arnold, said the new entrance location would be accepted. He reminded the residents that the application for this development predated the Greenbelt Plan Policy, and under the provincial legislation it can go ahead. He noted 21 wells on the property have already been drilled and tested over multi-seasons and for cross-interference. No more wells will be drilled. He added that, while the Region has set a security deposit of \$100,000 in case of well failure, that does not limit the developer's liability.

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