



Council supports Rockwood village expansion

Bigger park, Catholic school, church and 'nice homes' proposed for north end of Rockwood

The Wellington Catholic District School Board wants to be "excellent neighbours and partners" with Guelph/Eramosa Township in joint plans to expand Rockmosa Park, and build a church and school at the north end of the village.

School board consultant Dan Duszczyzyn made the hopeful comments as he left the Brucedale council chambers on Monday night after council approved a zoning amendment bylaw necessary for the development to proceed, and supported a Wellington County Official Plan amendment.

Maps, aerial photos, and planning reports – 98 pages in all – were used to explain joint applications to build on the "last large developable land" in Rockwood at the public meeting attended by approximately 60 people a week earlier at Rockmosa.

On the whole those, those who spoke at the

meeting approve of the Guelph/Eramosa Township and Wellington County applications that would triple the existing Rockmosa Park to 32 acres with the purchase of just over 20 acres from area farmer Barb Bonner.

The applications include a \$6-million Catholic elementary school and church off Main Street North, and a land swap to allow relocation of six residential lots to ensure continuous open school/park space.

CONCEPT B

At Council on Monday, Township planner Bernie Hermsen presented an updated concept from the Wellington Catholic District School Board (WCDSB), for its proposed Sacred Heart Catholic Elementary School, slated to open in 2015.

He said the WCDSB has provincial money for the school, and wants access directly to Wel-

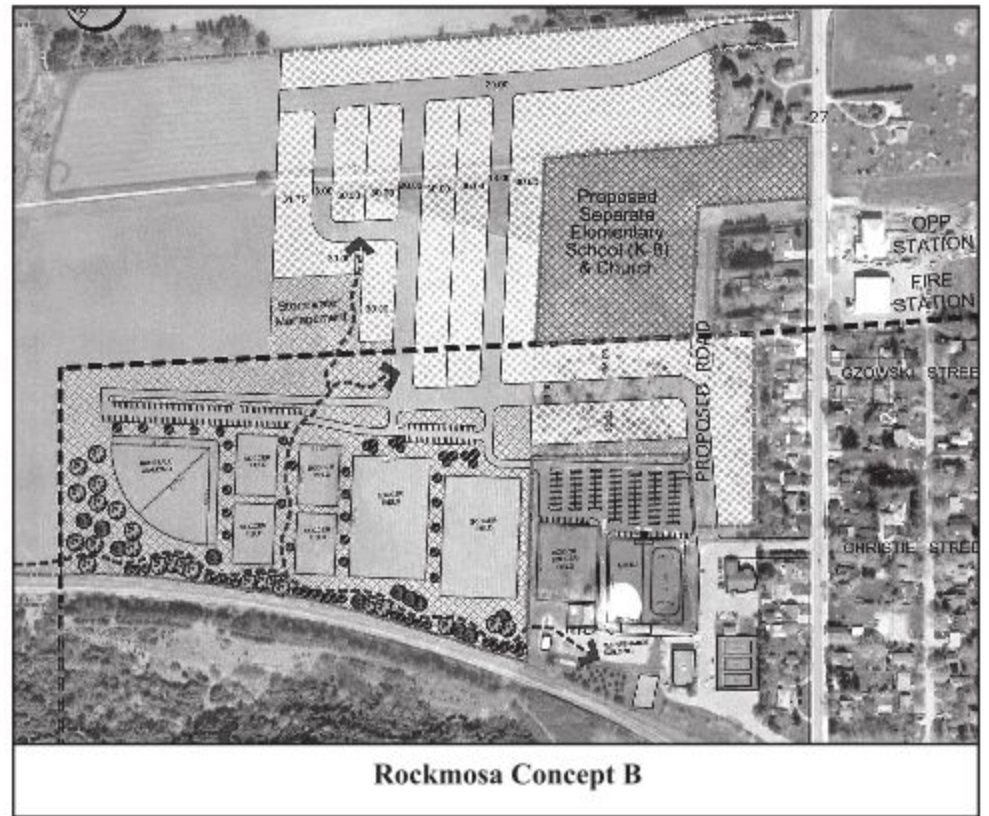
lington Road 27 (Main Street) North – a concept about "ten times" cheaper than building a new road according to the school board.

Expanding a municipal boundary is no easy feat and Hermsen said the applications faced a long checklist to ensure the growth was not a specialty crop area, and there were no reasonable alternatives that avoided prime agricultural areas. The approvals also hinge on the applications not impacting existing agricultural operations, being a logical extension of the road network, and being close to existing community infrastructure to provide opportunities for shared facilities.

Earlier Mayor Chris White said that along with more soccer fields at Rockmosa, he'd like to see a perimeter track, a toboggan hill and access to the new school gym on weekends so it could be a shared facility.

PROPOSAL RESPONSE

Hermsen said the applications did not raise any concerns with the County, Township or Grand River



Rockmosa Concept B

Conservation Authority. The province has not responded, and Hermsen said they had two letters of objection from the public. One Main Street North resident asked if the 50-km/h speed limit area could be extended further northward, and plans to deal with potential flooding in the area of a municipal drain. Hermsen said he'd investigate the speed issue, and there is ample room to build a road in the drain area to withstand a 100-year storm.

Another Main Street North resident's request for buffering from a road behind their house was resolved with the school board's revised concept.

BOUNDARY EXPANSION

Rockwood resident Mike Nagy's main concern was the "precedent-setting" move to

expand the village boundary, but included traffic safety, loss of farmland, the future of the existing Catholic Church, lighting and design standards.

Hermsen pointed to a background soil capability report indicating there are no Class One soils on the proposed residential lands. He said traffic issues would be dealt with after submission of a subdivision plan, and lighting and design standards would be covered during the site plan process.

Mayor Chris White said the boundary expansion might be precedent, but it is also a land swap that adds no additional houses, and preserves an open space area. He said it is not an "urban sprawl precedent - we see as a final opportunity...a once-in-a-life-time opportunity..."

Area resident Sherol Steinberg offered spirited support for the boundary

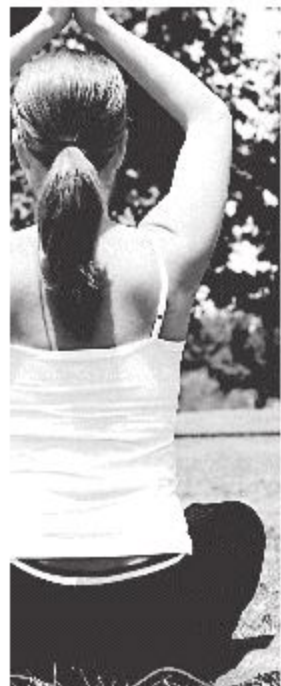
expansion because it supports the community, and quality of life that people want and expect. "My fear is, if we don't adopt this plan that has the parkland, where would we have places to meet?" she asked, adding the Rockmosa expansion is key to the Township's recently approved Master Recreation and Parks Plan.

K-TO-EIGHT SCHOOL PLAN

WCDSB planning consultant Nancy Shoemaker said they want to break ground in July on a two-story, nine or 10-classroom facility with two Kindergartens, a gym, resource centre/library and offices. There will be 268 students in K-to-eight, which will ride four to six busses daily.

Shoemaker said following a recent school board public meeting when the public raised issue with the proposed road with the Diocese of Hamilton, their plans were altered to allow access to Main Street North. "This (plan) still affords us the opportunity to put the (school) site very close to Rockmosa Park, and there still is the opportunity for direct sharing of facilities with connections through walkways..." Shoemaker said.

As per policy, councillors made no comment on the proposals at the public meeting, and await a final staff report and recommendation. The County Official and Zoning Bylaw amendments are available online at www.get.on.ca and at the Township's Brucedale HQ.



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Did you know?

Low Back Pain (LBP) is the most common complaint of all musculoskeletal problems, affecting up to approximately 80% of the people throughout their lifetime.

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