

Residents left with few options as Hornby wells drying up again

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The region won't connect them to a municipal water source until the land is rezoned as urban development land, and the Town of Halton Hills won't rezone the lands because of regional restrictions on land-use options.

In the end, these 16 homes were left out while the other properties in the area affected in 2008 were rezoned as urban and became eligible for public water.

Halton Region is aware of the well impacts being experienced by some of the residents in Hornby and has been working with those impacted residents to ensure they have a safe reliable supply of water. This has included the provision of permanent municipal water services to those properties within the urban boundary on Steeles Avenue and Hornby Road, wrote the region in an email response to *The IFP*.

The Region continues to support the secondary planning process being carried out by the Town of Halton Hills to consider the expansion of the urban boundary in the Hornby area, added regional reps.

Kowal provided documents to *The IFP* showing the town's Preferred Land Use Concept originally included them, but a region-imposed limit of 75 hectares of urban development in the area saw Halton Hills staff cut them from the study area in January.

(We've) been watching it coming along with the understanding that in a few years this is all going to be urban and we're going to have water. So people have been calm, people have been (saying) it's coming, it's coming, he said.

Kowal added even after they were cut from the urban study area in January, some members of council and Halton Hills staff assured them not to worry and that all the confusion would be sorted out in the final study draft.

However, an amendment put forward at council's April 10 meeting, which would have seen the 16 homes re-included, did not pass a council vote despite support from councillors Ted Brown, Michael Albano, Clark Somerville and Mayor Rick Bonnette. While not present for the vote, Kowal added councillor Bryan Lewis was supportive throughout the process as well.

Instead, council passed an amendment to study the possibility of connecting these residents to a municipal water source in the future leaving them back at square one.

Some of the landowners have been involved in the discussion for 18 months, and then at the very end it was recommended by staff that (the area) not (be included), even though the math is not exact. (The region) said it's about 75 hectares, said Somerville. So we were saying put it in. Put it in for this



A tank provided by Halton Region to Hornby resident Erik Kowal's brother, who lives a few doors down from him and whose well has already dried up.

Photo by Graeme Frisque

part (of the study), and then once we refine it down we can look and see then.

However, a majority of council ultimately didn't feel comfortable going against the region's imposed limits and town staff recommendations without more information.

According to Somerville, that leaves the homeowners with few options.

Our amendment failed, so the map is as presented now, said Somerville. I think we're dead in the water.

It was disappointing because I wish (the other councillors) had listened to our rationale a bit more, but that's what happens and it was a council decision, he said.

Rather than being included in the land-use study, which would have seen their properties rezoned down the road and provided them with access to town water, their lands will instead essentially remain in a holding provision designation, which Kowal says leaves them with no clear idea of what they can and can't do on their land.

Kowal added the region is again assuring them the water table will normalize once construction is complete, but he's not optimistic.

They're saying it will go back to normal again, but we've been down this road before.

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