

TOWN COUNCIL VOICES CONCERNS OVER BILL 23

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Bill 23 — the More Homes Built Faster Act — was a hot topic of discussion during Halton Hills town council's first meeting of the term on Dec. 12.

"These announcements immediately following the election set me back on my heels," said Mayor Ann Lawlor in her inaugural address. "The so-called 'More Homes Built Faster Act' threatens citizen participation, years of planning processes, natural heritage protection, climate action and heritage preservation," she added.

After being introduced into the provincial legislature with a first reading on Oct. 25, followed by much discussion and debate, a slightly amended version of Bill 23 received royal assent on Nov. 28. Most of the

bill is in force as of that date, said town staff.

As part of More Homes Built Faster: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan (HSAP): 2022-2023, the province says it aims to build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years — increasing the supply and mix of houses and other residential buildings that meet requirements for all Ontarians.

HSAP suggests the housing supply shortage can be addressed by "... reducing government fees and fixing development approval delays that slow housing construction and increase costs."

There are 10 schedules to Bill 23 — nine of which are applicable in Halton — "proposing sweeping changes to various pieces of legislation, including but not limited to, the Planning Act, Development

Charges Act, Conservation Authorities Act and Ontario Heritage Act," shared a town report presented to council.

Below are the highlights of 11 key elements of the approved Bill 23 that town staff have identified. Council and staff await further details around the bill expected to be released early next year.

PARKLAND DEDICATION FEES

Town staff shared that the loss in development charges and cash-in-lieu of parkland revenue is anticipated to be significant and will impact the town's ability to fund necessary infrastructure improvements and public service facilities such as libraries, community centres and arenas that are an essential component of a complete community.



Town of Halton Hills photo

Bill 23 has caused plenty of concern for Halton Hills council.

An estimated 60 to 75 per cent decrease in parkland dedication fees could be expected over the next 14 years, which, based on current estimates, could

represent a reduction of \$24 million to \$30 million over the years.

DEVELOPMENT CHARGES EXEMPTIONS

Several amendments were made to the Development Charges Act (DC Act) through Bill 23. Depending

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