

Greenbelt pushes but Erin stands tough



PHOTO BY STEPHEN BAKER

Concerned residents discuss official plan changes with Erin councillors.

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residents crowded into the Council Chambers had specific questions about how the amendment would affect lands owned by them, it was the effect of the province's greenbelt legislation that had the room humming.

Within the last month, areas of Erin and Puslinch both unexpectedly found themselves included in the land proposed as greenbelt. Wellington Councillor Lou Maieron asked Erin Mayor Rod Finnie at the public meeting why he seemed to be reluctant to be included in the greenbelt, while Puslinch Mayor Brad Whitcombe has stated that he is pleased to see Puslinch included. Mayor Finnie pointed out that, due to its geographic location, Puslinch is affected by the growth at the south end of Guelph and Guelph's ongoing plans to expand its public well system. "If I were sitting in Mayor Whitcombe's chair, I would feel the same way," said Mayor Finnie. He

pointed out that Erin does not have the same threat of urbanization that Puslinch has. He also said that Council had met with Victor Doyle, a representative from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and discovered that the principles of the greenbelt legislation and Erin's Official Plan are actually quite similar. "My own personal opinion is that I am not as worried about this as I was three weeks ago," said Mayor Finnie, although he did add "I will still be cautious until I see what is writ-

ten down in the legislation."

Erin resident Chris Byart expressed concerns about the financial implications the greenbelt may bring. "Have we got enough available land to build on, to build our tax base to keep taxes down for ten years?" he asked, after pointing out that once the greenbelt legislation is passed on December 15, it will not be amended again until at least ten years have passed. Erin Planner John Cox admitted that the proposed greenbelt legislation had lent a sense of urgency to the passing of the Official Plan, but felt that the Plan had set aside a more than adequate amount of land for the needs of the next ten years.

"I'm really glad about having our public meeting tonight," summed up Erin Councillor Jeff Duncan. "About four years ago the Town made a decision to create its own Official Plan. It's been four years of evolution. Not everyone will be happy but we have strived to meet the needs of everybody here."

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