



Stubborn blaze

Co-op student firefighters battle a stubborn grass fire along the CN Rail tracks north of No. 5 Sideroad and east of Regional Road 25 Monday afternoon. The blaze, which stretched about a half-kilometre along the tracks, closed both No. 5 Sideroad and the rail line for more than an hour while fire crews extinguished the flames.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Final decision will be made by joint board

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unique and upscale subdivision on the site.

Lawyer Bert Arnold, representing CMHL, told The Champion in an interview during a break at the hearing that CMHL has "prepared a well-landscaped, spacious plan that's going to be very unique to Milton."

"It's a fraction of the densities of a typical (subdivision) plan."

The Town, Region and NEC expressed to the board their opposition to CMHL's concept plan.

"(The Region) has carefully reviewed the concept plan and at this point is not satisfied it has met the criteria set out by the joint board," said Stan Floras, a lawyer with the Region.

CMHL's application has been before the board since 2001.

NEC lawyer Demterius Kappos said the commission has "serious concerns" about the concept plan.

"We are definitely not satisfied with what we see."

The Town's lawyer, Hal Watson, told the board town council passed a motion recently stating it doesn't support any development on the CMHL site.

On February 23, politicians were asked to approve a staff recommendation to support the 500-unit proposal with some modifications. The joint board requires the Town to give a position.

But some politicians worried it isn't the best plan for an area that falls in the sensitive Niagara Escarpment because it resembles a typical subdivision. A majority voted to defer making a decision to a special council meeting March 1.

Presented with four options from staff — 216 residential units, 242 units, 408 units and 500 units of varying lot sizes — council ended up voting unanimously that no growth be permitted on the large site.

Originally, CMHL was looking at building as many as 640 units. The revisions to get it down to 500 units came following a public meeting in January where residents got their first look at the development.

The joint board hearing has the final say on whether the CMHL development is approved or rejected. It's important to note that the Town's recommendations don't change what CMHL has submitted to the joint board.

Part of the plan includes that an 80-metre escarpment encroachment area be established that would limit units to one-level bungalows and that a park be established in the northwest corner of the site.

Mr. Watson said in an interview a joint board decision should come "within several months" from the time the hearing is over. It's possible the board could render a decision on the last day of the hearing, but he said that's not likely.

Linda Pim, of Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment (CONE), said in an interview the group would prefer that no development take place on the site.

But it will tell the board it opposes the concept plan based on two things — a 10-metre buffer around a 19-acre woodlot located on the site's west side is too narrow; she would prefer 20 to 25 metres.

Secondly, there's concern the open landscaped character of the escarpment risks being hindered by the development, Ms Pim said.

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