

West-end housing development endorsed, barely

Town council votes 5-4 for first phase of development. Some councillors say denying it could have had serious consequences

By **MELANIE HENNESSEY**
The Champion

It was a close 5-4 vote, but Milton council decided it's supporting the first phase of another proposed residential development that'll ultimately bring more than 600 homes to the town's west end.

At its meeting Monday night, council passed a resolution to establish its position in favour of the plans put forward by Main Street Milton Corp. in preparation for an upcoming Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearing on the development. The board will make the final decision on whether or not the subdivision can go ahead.

While the developer eventually wants to create 608 houses — a mix of single detached, semi-detached and townhomes — on the south side of Main Street West abutting the CN rail line, council only supported 507 of those units going ahead for the time being since there's currently water and wastewater capacity available for that number.

Before the narrow vote took place, council heard from Milton resident Bob Beyette, who urged council not to accept or approve the subdivision because "it is not the right place to build more homes and to cause more pollution."

"If allowed to proceed, (I think) there will be non-recoverable damage to the Niagara Escarpment face and to the overall surrounding watershed environment because of additional light, noise and air pollution that this new subdivision will surely cause to happen," he said.

Councillors also had the chance to speak their minds, like Ward 3 Councillor Jan Mowbray, who cited concerns with parking in the proposed subdivision. She pointed to other developments in Milton where the roads are so narrow and the frontage on homes is so short, there isn't adequate room for parking.

Town Senior Planner Barbara Koopmans said there are a number of aspects in the proposal that would make for a better parking situation, such as wider frontages on the lots that afford an opportunity for double garages and driveways.

Ward 1 Councillor Brian Penman pointed out the long list of additional revisions required to the subdivision plans that staff identified in a report, noting it's unusual to go forward with discussions on an application with so many outstanding items.

Director of Planning and Development Mel Iovio said a council

position needs to be established for the OMB hearing later this month.

After the discussion, Mr. Penman, Ward 1 Councillor Rick Day, Ward 2 Councillor Mark Curtis and Ward 3 Councillor Jan Mowbray voted against phase one of the subdivision, while Wards 1 and 3 Councillor Barry Lee, Wards 2 and 4 Councillor Ron Furik, Ward 3 Councillor Cindy Lunau and Ward 4 councillors John Challinor and Wendy Schau were in favour of the development. Ward 2 Councillor Mike Boughton was absent and was

unavailable for comment at press time due to illness.

In an interview with The Champion, Ms Lunau said she's concerned with how close the vote was, noting the decision to allow development in the subject area was made in the 1997 Official Plan, which designates it as an urban area.

"To suddenly decide at this late stage to pull out of the Official Plan would have serious consequences," she said. "We have to respect the decision made by the previous council."

She pointed out that the Town could've been faced with a costly OMB hearing if the vote had gone the other way and council didn't support the development.

Ms Schau shared similar sentiments, noting if a development

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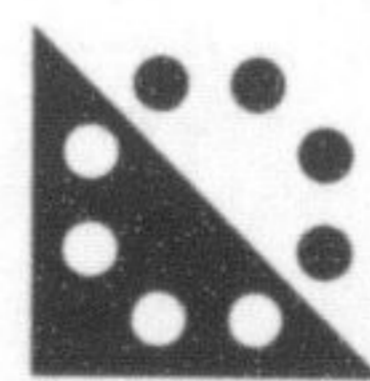
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