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# Council changes its mind on condo development

By Melanie Hennessey  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Milton council has abandoned its original position against condomini-

ums proposed for the town's east end and has instead reached a settlement with the developer just before the matter heads to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) — a move that has

floored residents opposed to the development.

The decision that the Town isn't going to defend its denial of the five four-storey buildings — which Maple

Crossing Developments is looking to construct at the northeast corner of Maple Avenue and Main Street — at the March 20 OMB hearing was made after an 'in-camera', or closed-door, discussion late last year.

Staff was then directed to negotiate a settlement that addresses site plan issues with the developer, which Director of Planning and Development Mel Iovio said it did.

"We brought back what we found was a reasonable settlement," he said, noting it was presented to council in January during its in-camera session.

Then, residents who live around the proposed site were informed of the settlement details at a meeting the Town held with them February 15.

For area resident Tracey Demaline, who attended the session, the settlement came as shocking news.

"We were hit with a bombshell," he said, noting he and his neighbours thought the meeting was being held to discuss how the Town was going to defend its August 29 denial of the condominiums.

"We were all kind of dumbfounded."

Now, the group of residents, which has opposed its condominiums all along, is taking their fight to the OMB, since the Town will no longer be there to take a position against the development.

"We've been scrambling since we found out," said Demaline. "We're trying to gather whatever funds we can to go to the OMB."

The terms of the settlement reached between the Town and developer involve several changes to the plans for the property, such as setting the condominium buildings farther back from the homes on Roper Drive and constructing and landscaping berms to further block the view of the development from neighbouring residents.

Town solicitor Hal Watson said the Town looked to get the best possible development it could while having as little impact on the surrounding homes as possible.

He explained that although a settlement has been reached, the matter still has to go to the OMB for a final decision because the Town originally denied the zoning bylaw amendment necessary for the development to proceed.

"Just because the Town reached a resolution doesn't mean anything," he said.

Watson explained now it's up to the developer to convince the board the condominiums are in the public interest and conform with the Town's Official Plan and the Province's policies.

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