

Council approves Shining Hill subdivision amendment

Official Plan amendments for developments on the north side of St. John's Sideroad, under Shining Hill Collections, were approved at Council last week on a vote of 6 - 1 where Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner voted against the amendment and expressed her alarm regarding the removal of 101 trees.

In her reasoning for her vote, she noted the lack of 'integrity' in waiting for proper approval from the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) before going forward with removing the trees.

101 trees were requested to be cut down to enable road access to the new St. Anne's School, said Councillor Gaertner at the March 28 Council meeting, adding that Council was later told that the road would enable access to the Shining Hill subdivision.

'That's something that Council wasn't told,' she said.

Councillor Gaertner said that at the February 15 General Committee meeting, representatives of the developer confirmed that removing 101 trees would require approval from the MECP. Brian Henshaw, Director and CEO at Beacon Environmental, a firm that provides environmental assessment and planning services, also confirmed the requirement for MECP clearance.

Weeks later, the Town allowed the 101 trees to be cut down, said Councillor Gaertner.

'I find it extremely alarming that this happened before the regulator for endangered species, the MECP, gave their approval,' she said. 'I know there's been some discussion if the 101 trees destroyed were the same trees that Mr. Given was talking about. It is very clear from Beacon's Environmental mapping that these are the same trees. Again, I find it extremely alarming that we didn't wait for MECP clearance.'

In addition to the approval of the Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment and Draft Plan of the Subdivision at Shining Hill, Council will grant allocation from the reserve to service the development of 87 single-detached dwellings and 21 townhouse units on they approved Draft Plan of the Subdivision.

The Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment be brought forward to a future Council meeting for enactment.

By Elisa Nguyen