

Heathwood Heights appeal to be fought at Ontario Land Tribunal

A proposal to build five homes on a single lot at 161 Heathwood Heights will be fought by the Town of Aurora at the Ontario Land Tribunal.

Proponents of the development plan have appealed their application to build five homes on the lot to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) and the Town confirmed its intentions to oppose the appeal following a special Closed Session Council meeting last week.

The motion, which was approved on a vote of 5 ? 1 with Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland opposed and Ward 4 Michael Thompson absent, instructs the Town solicitor to ?oppose the appeals relating to the Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw amendment applications and [that] an external lawyer and any necessary experts be retained to appear before the OLT to support Council's position.?

The Heathwood Heights proposal was recently the topic of an informal public meeting called by Ward 5 Councillor John Gallo and held at the Aurora Public Library on May 28 to get residents' input.

Nearly 20 residents attended the session, along with Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese and Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner.

Those who spoke up were unanimous in their view the Town should fight the appeal at OLT and cautioned they believed it could set a precedent not only in the Heathwood Heights community, but across Aurora as a whole.

?We're looking for people to stand up for principle,? said one resident. ?It's carving up a lot and it's the impact on Aurora and the Aurora trails system, which is why we moved from Newmarket 20 years ago to Aurora?. It's just one lot, but the implications and the far-reaching implications of it.?

It was a point of principle for another resident who said, the applicant is looking for ?all or nothing.?

?There's that concern on NIMBY-ism (Not In My Back Yard) and I'm sure that's got to be a part of it, but? it's the precedent that's going to be set,? they said. ?There's going to be creepage. It's not just that one property, and there's absolutely no gains to anybody except the developer. There's no low-cost housing. It's not solving any problems for anybody.

?If you're opening a can of worms, there's a number of homes in our neighbourhood that just sit empty, owned by whoever, we don't know. If they even got one to do that, they'd go, ?Why can't I do that? I'll make more money than someone else in this house. Let's put four on my property.' Then, down the street, somebody else puts four. What kind of neighbourhood are you going to have in 10 years??

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