

Neighbours "elated" over Mavrinac purchase

By Brock Weir

Residents in Aurora's northeast are celebrating a "big win" for the Town after learning the municipality has purchased a six acre parcel of land on Mavrinac Boulevard for \$2.47 million.

Aurora announced Monday it had purchased the property, known as Block 208, under the provisions of the area's original subdivision agreement laid out in 2007.

The area has been a source of contention for over two years since the York Catholic District School Board decided the land, which was set aside for a new secondary school in the area, was no longer needed and they waived their rights to the parcel.

At the urging of area residents, who were actively opposed to Minto Communities using this parcel to build further homes in Aurora's 2B block, Council moved to secure the land for municipal purposes at costs set out in the 2007 subdivision plan, a provision contained within the contract.

Minto, however, opposed the move and the developer and the municipality became involved in legal proceedings in January 2014.

For Mayor Dawe, this was all about ensuring provisions in the Town's agreement were enforced and carried out.

"If we don't enforce the provision of our contracts, our contracts are pretty much useless," said Mayor Dawe. "I have been pretty clear that my goal was to enforce our contractual rights. I am just pleased we were able to reach the agreement with Minto. I thought we were going to court, so I am pleased we're not going to be doing that. I can think of a lot of other places where we can spend the money."

The \$2.47 million to purchase the land in question will come out of Aurora's Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland reserve. Now that the land will soon be in municipal hands, the question then becomes just what Aurora is going to do with it.

Although some area residents spoke about the importance of maintaining the parcel as green space and parkland, there has been no commitment on what the land will ultimately become.

From the perspective of area neighbour Nahla Khouri, it is important that the land is ultimately used in a way that benefits all of Aurora.

"At the end of the day, it has to be something that truly comes from all residents and Town Staff," she said. "It is very hard for me to say in the abstract what it should be because I don't know what the Town needs are. This [purchase] is something that is for the entire town. It is a really big win for Aurora and I am excited to see what the next phase is. I am sure whatever it is will benefit the whole community."

In the meantime, Ms. Khouri and her neighbours are "revelling" in a victory.

"I am extremely happy," she said. "It is incredible news and I am glad we held our ground on the lawsuit and this is a great result for all of Aurora. I just want to revel in the fact we have acquired this land. I think there is going to be a huge sense of relief. Everyone is elated."