

Newmarket residents unhappy with 2C plans

By Brock Weir

Aurora's 2C Development, the last significant large-scale development in Town continues to come together with Council's approval of the Mattamy plan for one of the most northern areas of the plan.

The plans, however, have left some Newmarket neighbours whose properties back onto the planned subdivision, seeing red.

The concerns were brought forward to Council last week by Erica Russell of the Wildrush Homeowners Group. Ms. Russell told Council she believed there were 'inaccuracies' in the report before Council for approval and sought to clarify their position.

The report brought forward by Marco Ramunno, Aurora's Director of Planning, said the owners of the subdivision property met with the neighbours, including both the Wildrush group and the nearby Wyndham Village Homeowners Association 'on numerous occasions and had satisfied' their concerns.

These concerns, said, Mr. Ramunno, included lot frontage and making sure the new Aurora lots are of a compatible size with their Newmarket neighbours, the height of the buildings proposed, water control 'including a swale to direct storm water away from the Newmarket properties' and fencing.

While Ms. Russell said she could not speak for the Wyndham Village neighbours, she added her group did not leave the meetings feeling satisfied.

'Our group has not had the opportunity to provide adequate input into the planning process, given that Mattamy has consistently indicated they are at a premature stage of development and are not at the stage 'yet' to fully disclose and discuss any details of the proposed development plan,' said Ms. Russell. 'The two recent meetings held by Mattamy with the Newmarket interface served to address Wyndham Village resident concerns only. Wildrush had little or no opportunity to discuss any of our development concerns.'

She went on to ask Council that particular lots be excluded from the zoning bylaw amendment pending further public consultation with her group.

'The appropriate consultation and interface conditions have not been met and given that no detailed applications or drawings have been submitted by Mattamy, it is premature at this stage for the Town of Aurora to include [the blocks].'

In addition to the consultation process, Ms. Russell also raised concerns over water and drainage. Pumping stations are planned to help drain water in the area, but one, she added, was very close to the nearby homes. Neighbours have continually expressed their worry about drainage as a result of the proposed development and cast doubt on whether the proposed pumps would be sufficient to address potential issues, she continued.

The group took it upon themselves to take the matter to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) in the summer of 2011, at a significant cost, she added, hiring a lawyer and a planner to make their case. Their bid at the OMB, where they made a decision on zoning, was not successful.

Mr. Ramunno, however, countered he believed his report was correct in that the property owners have had meetings with the neighbours and ratepayers, but agreed Wyndham Village has had more consultations than the Wildrush group.

'Mattamy will agree in the agreement to implement a plan for a suitable interface for the residential lots and the Newmarket residents,' said Mr. Ramunno. 'That has been covered off. She did mention that lands haven't been designated and that is not the case because during the board hearing, which the residents were participants in, they had their own legal counsel, they agreed they agreed there was a settlement and Mattamy's legal counsel that those plans were designated by the 2C secondary plan for residential purposes.'

?Mattamy will continue to meet with them and what their interface plan would really look like, similar to Wyndham, is they have agreed to ensure that those rear lots within Aurora are deeper and they will include fencing and mature landscaping within those lots to satisfy residential concerns.?

The Mattamy lands were approved by Council during Tuesday's proceedings.