

Pledge of 8,000 housing units by 2031 approved by Council

Council last week approved a new Housing Pledge which, if brought to fruition, will lead to the creation of 8,000 new housing units by 2031.

The pledge was approved on a 4-3 vote, with Councillors Ron Weese (Ward 1), Wendy Gaertner (Ward 3), and John Gallo (Ward 5) in the opposition.

Along with the target of 8,000 new housing units, the Housing Pledge articulates the various efforts the Town is making to address the housing crisis. These include, but are not limited to, the inclusion of new strategies and actions on affordable and attainable housing in the Town's updated Official Plan, as well as streamlined processes to facilitate the timely review and approval of development applications and permits, said the Town in a statement following the September 26 Council meeting.

While Council members did not dispute the need for more residential units to address the housing crisis, the devil was very much in the details, including funding.

Announced by the Province this past summer, part and parcel of Council's or, at the very least, Heads of Council's approving a housing pledge will be financial incentives from Queen's Park determined by how successful each municipality is in achieving the targets.

This money, and the impact it might have on the community, was among the issues identified by opposing Councillors, along with the Premier's decision to include Aurora among nearly 30 Ontario municipalities to receive so-called Strong Mayor powers this fall should the pledge be made.

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