

Residents express concerns over Timberlane development

By Angela Gismondi

Brookfield Homes met with residents to discuss their new development at Timberlane Athletic Club Thursday, but residents had a few concerns about the plan and the process.

Representatives from Brookfield, who now own the Timberlane property on Vandorf Sideroad, held an informal neighbourhood meeting to inform residents about the development.

‘Our intent now is to provide you with an informal update of where we’re at,’ said Pete Schut, vice-president of acquisitions and development for Brookfield Homes. ‘In January or February, we plan to hold a formal meeting at the municipality.’

Property owners expressed a number of concerns including that only a select number of homes received notice of the meeting and that the meeting was scheduled on the same night as Aurora Council’s first General Committee meeting, making it impossible for the Mayor and Council to attend.

They also said Brookfield ensured community consultation, however, the neighbouring residents learned about the development when someone went to the Town and was informed an application had been submitted.

‘At the last meeting, we left here thinking we would be as cooperative with you as possible,’ said John Greenhough, a resident of Falconwood Estates. ‘There has been a lack of communication. A plan was submitted to the Town and we hadn’t heard from you. You talk about working with Council but you should be working with us.’

Schut explained the purpose of the meeting was to inform the residents about what to expect over the next year.

‘We want to show you guys what we have planned so there are no surprises,’ said Schut. ‘We want you to be able to prepare for the meetings. We thought it was appropriate to do this. Council is going to have to decide whether it’s going to be something they support or don’t support.’

But residents said they were not convinced.

‘As far as I can tell, this is a presentation, not a discussion,’ said Grant Gibson. ‘Frankly, why are we here? You could have mailed this to us.’

There have been some changes since the last neighbourhood meeting held in the spring, including a reduction in the unit count, which is now at 68. There has also been a slight change to the road configuration and the buffering to the neighbouring properties. While Greenhough admitted changes had been made, it is not enough.

‘I think you made some substantial changes since the last time,’ he said. ‘I think the density is still a concern with respect to the property. You still have a ways to go.’

Other residents expressed concerns about the proposed buffer, the proximity of the new homes to the backyards of the existing homes and whether or not the developer is planning to put up a fence. They wanted to know how the units would look and how much they would cost, but Schut explained those details will not be finalized until the site plan phase next year.

‘To be honest, in terms of design elements, we just haven’t gotten there yet,’ said Schut. ‘For price, it will all come down to square footage, specs and how things are priced around us.’

Existing residents also wanted to know how long construction would take.

?We hope to be in and out in a year,? said Schut. ?That's assuming the market is there to support that kind of construction program.?

He ensured all construction access will take place on Vandorf Sideroad as not to disrupt the neighbouring communities.

Some were also worried about the fate of the mature trees on the property. Schut agreed to walk the property with the residents to see if it would be feasible to keep the trees.

Brookfield plans to submit a revised plan to the Town of Aurora early next week.