

Statutory Public Meeting - Metrus Phase 9 - September 10, 2014 - Tony Usher

Thank you, Mayor Grossi and Council. My name is Tony Usher. I am the planning consultant for the North Gwillimbury Forest Alliance.

The Alliance and I have one major concern about the Metrus Phase 9 applications - that they are premature and not in the public interest at this time. I have provided a detailed written submission, so I will very briefly summarize why I've come to that conclusion.

By my calculations, and in my opinion, the density of the proposed subdivision is 16.9 units per hectare, whereas the density that the Keswick Secondary Plan permits for this subdivision is 14.8. Staff have raised the same issue in their report. In my view an Official Plan amendment, to the Secondary Plan, is required. I agree with staff that density standards apply over the entire Metrus low-density residential area, but these applications, particularly because of their size, are really a turning point in terms of Metrus's ability to conform to the density policies.

However, let me be clear, I'm all for higher density, so for me, the OPA requirement is more of a technical issue. The heart of the Alliance's and my concerns relates to Metrus's Maple Lake Estates.

As Council is well aware - having discussed this again only a week ago - confidential negotiations about a Maple Lake development approvals exchange are currently under way. The Official Plan review Planning Directions report you received in June, was very clear that the planning process needs to give room for these negotiations to hopefully bear fruit.

I have made submissions to the Town that make clear there are only two plausible candidate sites for Metrus to receive equivalent development approvals in Georgina. The better of these two sites, in my opinion, is on the Metrus-affiliate lands in South Keswick.

The applications before you occupy 36% of Metrus's remaining undeveloped land that the Town has identified for low-density residential in South Keswick. The

applications do not take any account of the relocation possibility and the increased densities that would require. Their approval at this time would in my view make it significantly harder to accomplish that. I'm concerned that one of the parties to the Maple Lake negotiations, is submitting applications that could constrain the possible outcomes of those negotiations.

As well, the Maple Lake development exchange issue is part of the Official Plan review process itself - which is still under way.

Finally, I'd like to remind Council that sooner or later, one of the following must happen, unless Metrus completely abandons Maple Lake Estates.

- Metrus will try to proceed under its existing Maple Lake approvals; or
- Metrus will try to obtain new approvals at Maple Lake; or
- there will be agreement on a development approvals exchange, which will then require new approvals for the new site.

Obviously, there are substantial uncertainties associated with each of these options, and maybe none of them are achievable. In the meantime, the 2,146 persons originally intended to occupy the Maple Lake site remain part of the Town's growth obligations, and accommodating those growth obligations is central to the ongoing Official Plan review.

For all these reasons, it would in my opinion be premature for the Town to further foreclose options to relocate the Maple Lake population to South Keswick, which is a recognized settlement area and is not subject to significant environmental and natural heritage constraints.

Therefore, I am asking you not to approve these applications, until all these issues of prematurity have been dealt with satisfactorily.

Those are my comments. Mayor Grossi and Council, thank you very much for your time and consideration tonight.