

Speaking Notes for Jack Gibbons  
Town of Georgina Council Meeting  
April 20, 2016

Mayor Quirk and Members of Council, I am Jack Gibbons from the North Gwillimbury Forest Alliance.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you tonight about the proposed new Official Plan for the Town of Georgina.

The new Official Plan prohibits development on all of our major wetlands and woodlands with one exception – the Maple Lake Estates property in the North Gwillimbury Forest.

The Town's proposed special treatment for Maple Lake Estates is inconsistent with Sections 26 and 27 of the *Planning Act*.

Section 26 of the *Planning Act* legally obliges the Town to bring its Official Plan into consistency with the Provincial Policy Statement.

And Section 27 of the *Planning Act* legally obliges the Town to bring its Official Plan into conformity with the York Region Official Plan.

Let's start with the Provincial Policy Statement. It prohibits development on all provincially significant wetlands in southern Ontario. And, as you know, the Maple Lake Estates property is located on the Paradise Beach-Island Grove provincially significant wetland. Therefore most of the Maple Lake Estates property is off limits to development according to the Provincial Policy Statement.

Let's now turn to the *York Region Official Plan*.

Section 2.2.35 of the *York Region Official Plan* prohibits development on Georgina's wetlands.

And section 2.2.44 of the Region's *Official Plan* prohibits development on Georgina's significant woodlands.

Approximately 90% of the Maple Lake Estates property is located on wetlands and/or significant woodlands. Therefore approximately 90% of the Maple Lake Estates property is off limits to development according to the Regional Official Plan.

Furthermore, there is nothing in the Transition section of the Regional Official Plan (Sections 8.4.14 to 8.4.20) that exempts the Maple Lake Estates property from the Region's environmental protection rules for wetlands and significant woodlands.

Now let's turn to the *Greenbelt Plan*. As Mr. Lenters has correctly noted, the Maple Lake Estates property is designated as "Towns and Villages" in the *Greenbelt Plan*. Unfortunately,

on the basis of this simple fact, Mr. Lenters jumps to the conclusion that the Town is exempted from its *Planning Act* obligations to prohibit development on Maple Lake Estates' wetlands and woodlands. But in reality there is no factual or legal basis for Mr. Lenters' huge leap of logic. I have read the *Greenbelt Plan* from cover to cover and there is not one single sentence in the *Greenbelt Plan* that states that "Towns and Villages" such as Maple Lake Estates are exempt from Sections 26 and 27 of the *Planning Act*.

On the contrary, if you read the *Greenbelt Plan* you will see that its rules do NOT apply to "Towns and Villages" such as Maple Lake Estates. Here is a direct quote from page 7 of the *Greenbelt Plan*:

“Further, this Plan does not apply to lands within the boundaries of Towns/Villages and Hamlets, as they existed on the day this Plan came into effect. Municipal official plans will continue to govern land use within these settlements.”

Let me repeat what I just said. According to the *Greenbelt Plan*: “Municipal official plans will continue to govern land use within these settlements”.

That is, there is nothing in the *Greenbelt Plan* which requires the new Official Plan to continue to designate Maple Lake Estates as Urban Residential. And there is nothing in the *Greenbelt Plan* that exempts the Town of Georgina from its *Planning Act* obligations to prohibit development on approximately 90% of the Maple Lake Estates property.

Nevertheless in his written report for tonight's meeting (Report No. DS-2016-0029, pages 25 & 26) Mr. Lenters implies that his faulty logic is supported by a February 14, 2013 letter from the Region of York. So let's turn to this letter and see what it actually says. The Region's letter is only one page long. But it does not support Mr. Lenters' faulty logic. Specifically, the York Region letter does **not** say that the Town of Georgina is exempt from its *Planning Act* obligations to prohibit development on Maple Lake Estates' wetlands and woodlands. On the contrary, the letter merely states that the *Greenbelt Plan* and York Region's transition policies with respect to the *Greenbelt Plan* do not prohibit development on the Maple Lake Estates' property. We agree. As we have repeatedly stated, it is the *Planning Act*, not the *Greenbelt Plan* that obliges you to prohibit development on the Maple Lake Estates property.

In conclusion, Mayor Quirk and Members of Council, we are here tonight to ask you to obey the law. Please amend your proposed new Official Plan to prohibit development on Maple Lake Estates' wetlands and woodlands.

Mayor Quirk and Members of Council, tonight you have the opportunity to save the North Gwillimbury Forest – forever.

Please do it. The people of Georgina will thank you.

Thank you for your attention. If you have any questions, I would be pleased to answer them.