

Caledon Village residents share concerns about proposed condos ahead of OLT hearing]

By Zachary Roman

Some residents are not convinced applicants have done enough to justify the condos they want to build in the heart of Caledon Village.

At Caledon Council's April 25 meeting, an update on the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) hearing for a proposed condo development at 0 and 18314 Hurontario Street was submitted as a memorandum. The lands in question are located south of Charleston Sideroad on the west side of Hurontario Street, and are 3.41 acres in size.

Stephanie McVittie, Manager of Development in Caledon's Planning department, created the update on the development for Council to review ahead of the OLT hearing on it planned for April 26.

Several residents of Caledon Village submitted written comments about the update and delegated about it on April 25.

According to the Town, the application for the development in question was first received in February 2021. The applicants were seeking zoning changes, approval for a site plan, and approval for their plan of condominium.

The applicants' initial application proposed 30 one-and-a-half and two-storey townhouse units that would be linked by a private condominium road, and serviced with municipal water and a communal septic system.

Concerns were raised back then by residents and the Town of Caledon around access, traffic, parking, servicing, grading, drainage, community character, housing density and more. Ontario's Ministry of Transportation also indicated that access to Hurontario Street would not be supported based on the initial proposal.

Due to these concerns and more from other agencies, the Town of Caledon requested revised submissions from the applicants before it would consider allowing the development. However, the applicants seeking to develop the property, Jannett and Richard Nicholson and 2683894 Ontario Inc., did not submit revised submissions before appealing the Town's decision to the OLT on September 8, 2021.

The OLT then set the matter for a 15-day hearing beginning on April 3, 2023. According to the Town, ?witnesses in the area of planning, engineering, transportation, heritage and

urban design, landscape architecture and noise were retained for the OLT hearing, which included a requirement for these experts to engage in without prejudice expert's meetings.?

On March 6, before the OLT hearing, the applicants provided an updated plan to revise their development. Among other changes, they reduced the number of proposed townhouse units from 30 to 27, eliminated the communal septic system and instead planned for one system for each of their seven planned condominium blocks, and retained a heritage building on their lands.

Due to the update and discussions being held between experts, the OLT hearing was postponed until April 26.

According to the Town, after the applicants submitted their updated proposal, ?there are limited areas that remain in dispute between the experts being called by the Appellant and the Town.?

The Town said it's not concerned at this time with the feasibility of the septic system and that ?a further review of the septic system will be done at the detailed design stage and is to be included as a condition of the Site Plan agreement and Draft Plan of Condominium approval, and prior to building permit issuance.?

The Town also wants to see an appropriate setback from Highway 10 for the Ministry of Transportation, among other improvements to the application. It is possible the OLT could approve a zoning by-law change for the application with a holding symbol (H), which would mean the applicant could not develop the property until meeting the Town of Caledon's remaining requests.

Kate Hepworth, President of the Caledon Village Association, said she was concerned about Council going into confidential session on April 25 to discuss the OLT hearing. She said the applicant's revised proposal makes strong assumptions about the approvals the applicants are hoping to receive from parties like the Ministry of Transportation.

"This application does not fit Caledon Village, we understand that development will happen but we are not part of the high-density areas in Caledon and the ongoing building of out-of-character homes needs to stop," said Hepworth. "The Caledon Village Association suggests that part of the (H) designation include certainty that cumulative septage from 27 dwellings shall not pollute the groundwater in southwest Caledon Village."

Caledon Village resident Michele Blanchard-Seidel said she understands why the applicants would like to squeeze as many homes in as possible, but that the condo development would not fit the community.

"The already congested traffic in the heart of our Village at the main intersection is already a nightmare with increasing developments to the north and west of our area, and the proposed blasting quarry that will undoubtedly add more heavy truck traffic," said Blanchard-Seidel. "And that doesn't include the summer/cottage-going crowd during the warmer weather...we simply do not have the capacity to handle this."

Blanchard-Seidel said she thinks people might regret buying one of the condos if they are made, as the traffic noise is already bad and will get worse.

"I'm not against change, but (I want) reasonable and responsible change? change that will

enhance our community? not make it worse so a developer can get a return on their investment," she said.

The Town of Caledon and the experts it brought on board attended the OLT hearing on April 26, barring any change after this article was sent to press. The Town will be waiting to hear the OLT's decision and will update Council and the community when it comes in.