

Planning and Environment Committee
24 January 2006
Presentation by Ottawa Forests and Greenspace Advisory Committee

Agenda Item 5: 6350 Fernbank Road, ACS2006-DEV-APR-0001

The Ottawa Forests and Greenspace Advisory Committee prefers that none of this 28.3 ha parcel of land be developed.

However, at last week's Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee meeting, we supported the purchase by the City, of 3.04 ha of that land, and the transfer of approximately 12 additional ha of land to the City at no extra cost. We understand that the transaction is contingent on the approval by you and Council of the Official Plan Amendment and Zoning bylaw change.

We are therefore not opposing the Official Plan Amendment and the Zoning Bylaw changes proposed even although it means that some of the 28 ha will be developed for residential use.

We support the staff report recommendation for an addition to Section 5.4.5 of the Official Plan of a policy statement that identifies this wetland as locally significant. We also support the requirement for an Environmental Impact Statement prior to any approval of development on these and adjacent lands. It would be a tragedy if the proposed subdivision eventually leads to the drying up of the wetland, an ultimate waste of the City's \$1.2 M.

We are, however, concerned about two aspects of the proposed development and although this is not the forum to discuss those concerns, we want to bring them to your attention.

Our first concern is about the placement of the Stormwater Management Pond in a wetland area (Block 173 shown in document 2), a concern shared by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment. The construction of a Storm Water Management Pond is prohibited (see letter from RVCA dated 17 March 2005). We have seen email traffic that indicates the storm water will be piped to a pond on the east side of Main Street. That will result in the loss of recharge water for the wetland. On the other hand, while it is correct that wetlands filter and purify runoff, the level of contamination from residential areas poses a threat to the wildlife inhabiting the wetland and to the integrity of the wetland itself. We will be looking for proposals in the subdivision plan for soft rather than hard landscaping in order to maximize direct entry of surface runoff into the ground rather than diversion via channels, to a storm water management pond. We think that prior diversion will contribute to the longevity of the adjacent wetland.

Our other concern is about the proposal to extend West Ridge Drive from Fernbank road, through the wetland to the new subdivision and exiting on Main Street. While we understand concerns about excessive traffic on Main Street, our position is that process of constructing the road is almost certain to have undesirable impacts on wetland function. Its eventual presence, dividing the wetland, may also have an adverse long-term impact. We will be looking at the potential for two exits onto Main Street and no extension of West Ridge into the new development when the subdivision plan comes to us for comment.

Iola Price,
Chair,
Ottawa Forests and Greenspace Advisory Committee