

## **Submission to City Clerk Regarding Proposed Official Plan Amendment to the Zoning By-Law and Draft Plan of Subdivision – Pratt Development 40 Ferndale Drive South (Manhattan West)**

The following submission from The Friends of Bear Creek Wetland Community Group represents the concerns of numerous community residents regarding the proposed development by Pratt Homes adjacent to The Bear Creek Wetland on the West side of Ferndale Drive.

Concerns expressed relate to area residents as well as to several groups that take advantage of the vibrant ecosystem provided by Bear Creek Wetland. The students of Ferndale Woods Public School, other schools in the area, the local Beaver and Boy Scouts chapters among others all benefit from ready access to the wetland learning opportunity.

Our submission is not only to voice our concerns. It is also an appeal to City Council and Pratt Homes to take every effort to ensure that appropriate studies have been undertaken in the actual concept plan and proposal to achieve the goals of preserving both the Bear Creek Wetland and community benefits.

While area residents are very upset about the lack of disclosure in the proposal, many feel they have been deceived by the city, developers of their homes, and the City of Barrie. Many homeowners on Summerset Dr. and Nicholson Dr. were told before purchasing that the properties backed on environmentally protected (EP) lands, the highest form of environment protection. Many contacted the City to verify if this was factual and the city concurred. With this assurance buyers were willing to pay a premium for properties backing on a desirable 'environmentally protected' landscape. It was a price worth paying so our families could enjoy the beauty that was promised to be protected.

What was not disclosed by the city and other parties is that there are varying degrees of environmental protection and depending on the designation, it can be rezoned. With rezoning, the promise of protected beauty will become meaningless. As well, property values will decline in direct relation to the premiums paid.

Following are the key concerns that our group has categorized:

### **Environment**

- There is an abundance of wildlife including deer, turkeys, racoons, wolves, reptiles, amphibians, insects, numerous species of birds, and a variety of other species living in the forested area. As well, there are Brook Trout in the tributaries. What are the developer's proposals to address the displacement of wildlife in their natural habitat and the impacts on plants and trees?
- This area is one of the last natural habitats for wildlife within city boundaries. The City should be encouraging more educational use of this area.

- Have the various environmental groups and appropriate conservation authorities been contacted to review the development plan and provide guidance and direction?
- Has a survey been done on the different species of plants and animal species in the proposed development sites?
- Have studies taken place to determine the impact on flora and fauna resulting from the original Manhattan development on the east side of Ferndale and were these impacts considered in the Manhattan West proposals?
- Has a peer review been done on the Environmental Impact Study? This needs to occur to ensure the integrity of the original report.
- Residents on the east side of Ferndale Dr. have reported that the water supply in the Eco Park wetlands have declined since construction began on the Manhattan East project. The resultant stagnant water has become a breeding ground for mosquitos. We are concerned that a similar situation will occur with the Manhattan West development, potentially creating health issues such as West Nile.
- According to Section 2.1.6 of Provincial Policy Statement, 2005, issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act, "Development and site alteration shall not be permitted on adjacent lands to the natural heritage features and areas ..... unless the ecological function of the adjacent lands has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or on their ecological function." Construction of Manhattan East has led to negative impacts in regards to water levels, fewer birds, and the possibility of stagnant water. Do the proposals for both Manhattan North West and Manhattan South West ensure minimal impact on the surrounding wetland area, as required by the Policy Statement?
- Section 2.6.3 of the Provincial Policy Statement notes that "Development and site alteration may be permitted on adjacent lands to protected heritage property where the proposed development and site alteration has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that the heritage attributes of the protected heritage property will be conserved." Has Pratt proved this?

## **Neighbourhood**

- The development backs on 32 existing residences on Summerset and Nicholson. Will the City confirm and advise homeowners how the properties will adjoin to the development and any impacts to existing properties?
- How will the City and developer address the concerns of Summerset and Nicholson homeowners (whose properties back on the proposed development) regarding diminishing property values and the loss of privacy and the benefits associated with a vibrant natural landscape?
- What is the City's response to the confusing and inadequate information provided to Summerset and Nicholson homeowners by city staff at time of purchase?
- How will property values of homes currently backing on the wetland be affected by the rezoning of environmentally protected land but also by the proposed town homes, condominiums, and very small detached home lots, and the discrepancy between the market value of proposed homes and existing properties?

- The project design does not take into consideration the impact on homeowner privacy and the movement of wildlife. A forest buffer/wildlife corridor would address these concerns.
- Will the development's increased density mean higher taxes for the existing community?

## **Design Concept**

- Some of the homes along Nicholson sit 20-30 ft. above the ravine floor. What is the plan for the significant elevation differences between the existing residential and proposal area?
- Why was bore hole testing not completed for the entire length of the development? The area between the pedestrian walkway and 113 Nicholson was not tested.
- Manhattan West (essentially an infill project) will back on and impact a single-family community. Have the impacts of increased intensification (town homes, condominiums) on the environment and the single-family-dwelling neighbourhood been considered?
- Is the proposal property designated as an intensification area in the "Places to Grow" strategy?
- The Manhattan West South plan identifies 21 townhomes but no detail on the size, shape, access to the properties, proximity to protected lands, and parking. Will these questions be addressed during the planning department review?
- The storm water sewer location seems too close to existing roads (Ferndale and the proposed new road) and will not be visually pleasing when first entering the development. What would the City propose as an alternative approach?
- The development plan does not show any sidewalks. How will they adjoin to other amenity areas? There is currently no sidewalk that runs along Ferndale. Is this not cause for concern?
- Is the proximity of the storm water management – basically adjacent to the designated wetland, a concern considering there could be contaminated runoff and overflow into the water table? Have studies been undertaken regarding this issue?
- Does the development proposal include a schedule and timeline for the project? Copies should be available to the public.
- Has there been a proposal regarding the area west of where Pratt's proposed development ends on Nicholson? Since this land is owned by a different developer (Auburn Developments), what are they proposing and do their plans align with Pratt's?
- Will there be a buffer zone joining the two developments and separating them from existing properties? There should be consistency between developments to maintain community, property, and landscape similarities.
- The Manhattan North West development identifies two underground parking lots (42 cars each). How can this be possible in a swamp area?
- Community residents are concerned by the speed at which the development approval process is proceeding – minimal time has been provided for the community to do the necessary research needed to effectively voice their concerns. Pratt has owned the land for 30 years. Why the rush to development? The City and the community need time to consider all options. Pratt has developments ongoing in other areas of Barrie to which they could direct their attention.

## **Intensification**

- The City notes that its Natural Heritage Strategy “is intended to preserve and improve the network of environmental features remaining in the City for the area encompassed by the City boundaries as they existed on December 31, 2009”. Further, Council has indicated that their goals for the current term include the protection of EP land. Does it seem appropriate then, that the City is considering an application from Pratt to build two large residential developments – Manhattan North West and Manhattan South West in such close proximity to the environmentally Bear Creek Wetland?
- There are four main areas for intensification in the City of Barrie. According to the City’s Intensification Study, The Bear Creek Wetland is not included in these areas. Further, the City has designated the Wetland area including the property just outside the boundary as a Level 1 (the highest) Natural Heritage section of land.
- The Intensification Study does not completely exempt the possibility of other areas of the city from being included. Does it make sense then to include an Environmentally Protected, Level 1 Natural Heritage section of land in this intensification given that there exists many other areas within Barrie and the new boundaries of Barrie after the Innisfil amalgamation that should be considered first.

## **Transportation Corridor**

- What impact will the proposals have on safety and traffic flows on Nicholson, Summerset, Ferndale, and Gore? (Summerset and Ferndale in particular currently have very heavy traffic flows.) Proximity of the proposed road to Summerset, and its turning lanes, as well as the dangers associated with merging and potential U-turns onto Ferndale during rush hours, are key issues that need to be addressed.
- Will Gore Rd. be extended as a through street based on Auburn’s plan?
- The proposal identifies 43 detached homes on a straight 530 metre road, plus expansion. This length of road will encourage street racing and is not visually pleasing. This is a concern to community residents and should be a concern to the City. Is there a by-law to prevent these types of road orientations?
- What is the long-term plan for the proposed road as it appears not to end at the West end of the development. Could this road extend to Gore or to other roads in the future?

The proximity of the proposed development to existing homes, the potential encroachment on Bear Creek Wetland, traffic and safety issues, and the overall consequences that follow are major concerns for the existing community. It is therefore critical that the City, developer, and the community examine all details of the project, confirm all compliances have been met and that the final approved development design ensures the maximum protection of the natural environment and community interests. We look forward to working with the City and the Developers to ensure these objectives are achieved.

As an example of a positive outcome of citizens contesting a development application, we can look to the 300 Essa Road development, where substantial changes to density occurred and planned commercial retail space eliminated through extensive consultation between the City, the developer’s representative, and area residents.

We recognize that the City of Barrie is a growing community and that additional housing and expanded infrastructure are important components of this growth. But community members expect such growth to occur in a fair and responsible manner that respects the environment and the rights of the community. They do not want to see development gone wrong, such as the area on Ferndale, across from the City Works Buildings (behind Simcoe Building Centre, where there is a vast desolate clear cut with piles of topsoil and sand separated by a handful of trees in a narrow area.

If Council feels the objective of fair and responsible growth that respects the environment and rights of the community will not be achieved by the Manhattan developments now being proposed, then the project should be delayed until the developer presents a project design that effectively addresses and minimizes social, environmental, and economic impacts,

Members of the Steering Committee,

The Friends of Bear Creek Wetland Community Group:

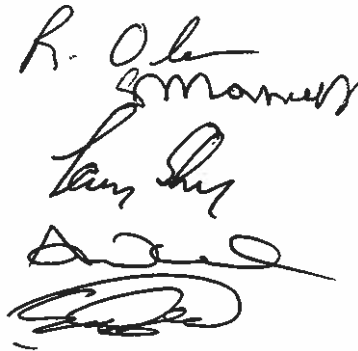
Rich Olech,

Stephen Manuel,

Larry Skory,

Andrea Ward,

Sean Sears,

The image shows four handwritten signatures in black ink, arranged vertically. The first signature is 'R. Olech', the second is 'Stephen Manuel', the third is 'Larry Skory', and the fourth is 'Andrea Ward'. The signatures are written in a cursive, flowing style.

*Now Entering* BEAR CREEK WETLANDS  
**WILDLIFE CROSSING**



**FRIENDS OF BEAR CREEK  
WETLAND COMMUNITY GROUP**

City Council Meeting

May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012

# Environmental Concerns

- Displacement of wildlife, plants and trees.
- Educational and recreational use.
- Environmental and conservation authority guidance and review.
- Environmental impact study.



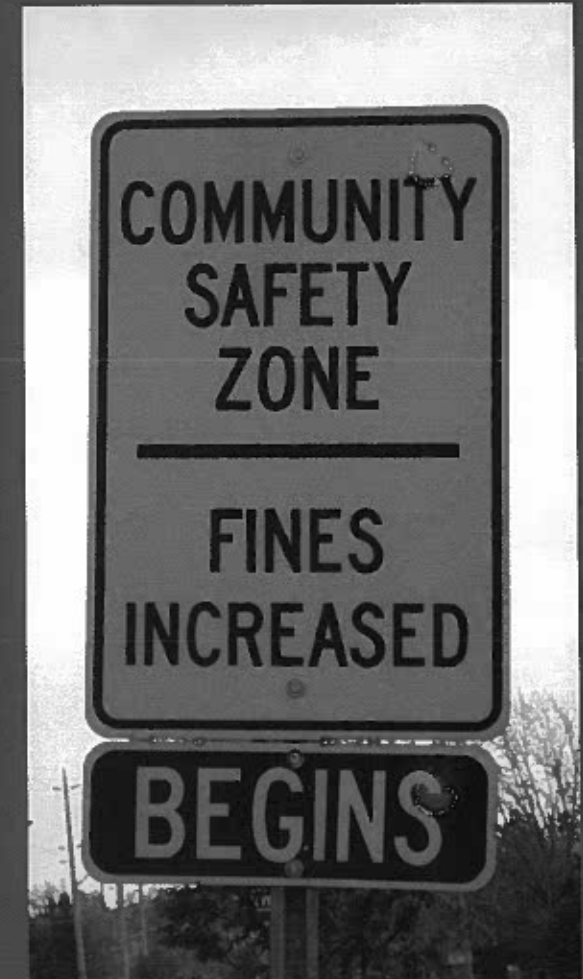
# Environmental Concerns cont'd

- Post East Manhattan development impact studies.
- Peer review and integrity of Environmental Impact Study.
- Provincial policy and Natural Heritage.
- Health issues: Water supply-flooding-erosion-contamination-West Nile



# Neighbourhoods Concerns

- Impact to existing properties.
- Concerns of diminishing property values.
- Conflicting information provided to home owners at time of property purchase.
- Discrepancy between current residential density and proposed development.
- Higher taxes for existing community.



# Design Concept

- Elevation differences.
- Bore hole testing.
- Storm water sewer location, management, possible contamination of the Bear Creek Wetland

**-SAMPLING -  
BOREHOLE TESTING-  
AUTHORIZED BY  
THE CITY OF BARRIE**



# Design Concept Concerns cont'd

- Increased intensification and “Places to Grow”.
- Possible continuation of development by Auburn Developments.
- Development proposal schedule/timeline.

PLACES TO GROW

BETTER CHOICES. BRIGHTER FUTURE.

*The City of*  
**BARRIE**



# Intensification Concerns

- Natural Heritage Strategy and protection of EP land.
- Bear Creek Wetland is not included in the four main areas for intensification in the City of Barrie.
- Logic of including an Environmentally Protected, Level 1 Natural Heritage section of land.



# Transportation Corridor

- Safety and traffic flow on Nicholson, Summerset, Ferndale, and Gore.
- Extension of Gore Street with Auburn's Development plan?
- Orientation and safety of proposed new road.



# Points to Ponder...

- We do not represent a “Not in my Backyard” (NIMBY) group
- Proposed developments do not provide sufficient analysis on environmental and community impacts
- Significance of the forest areas and wildlife habitat minimized
- Provincial policies that govern development not fully addressed

# What we want

1. City council protects the environment and the interests of the community
2. Minimize environmental impacts
3. Developer act as a community Leader
4. Legacy for future generations
5. Residents act as a partner

