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October 18, 2006

Mr. Denis Kelly
Regional Clerk
Regional Municipality of York
York Region Administrative Centre
17250 Yonge St.
Newmarket, ON CA L3Y 6Z1

**REGION OF YORK
CLERK'S OFFICE**

FILE No. - *p03*

Dear Mr. Kelly:

Subject: Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 51 (ROPA 51)
Town of Georgina Official Plan Amendment No. 97
Keswick Business Park (Urban Expansion)
Our File No.: 19-DP-1994-06049

This letter requests that Regional Council not proceed to provide final adoption to the regional official plan amendment at its meeting tomorrow, which would also entail not making a decision on the town official plan amendments as well. The reasons for this request are set out below.

The Ministry wrote to the York Region Planning Department on October 3, 2006 setting out two outstanding matters related to this proposal. In addition, we have engaged in recent discussions and meetings with the Region, Town, Ministries of Public Infrastructure Renewal and Environment and the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority.

At the outset, the Ministry's one-window review has accepted the justification for the proposed Business Park both from a Town and Regional level and acknowledged that this proposal may proceed based on Section 3.4.4 of the Greenbelt Plan. Further, staff from all three ministries have been working closely with both the Region and Town in the ongoing progress of this proposal.

Our October 3, 2006 letter advised of two outstanding matters. The first was related to servicing and the Lake Simcoe Assimilative Capacity Study. The second dealt with the treatment of the Greenbelt Natural Heritage System. These are further discussed below.

Servicing

The coordination of land use and demonstration of servicing capabilities, particularly where watershed related issues cross municipal boundaries (eg. Lake Simcoe), is a key policy thrust of both the PPS 1997 and 2005. Similarly, the protection of the water quality is a primary objective in both versions of the PPS, a matter which takes on greater complexity and risk when dealing with inland lakes.

Water quality is typically evaluated against the Provincial Water Quality Objectives (PWQO's), which is the case for phosphorus, the primary element of consideration in the context of the Lake Simcoe Environmental Management Strategy (LSEMS). As a result, in order for land use changes, and particularly urban expansions, to be considered for approval, there needs to be demonstration of feasibility that effluent discharges (sewage treatment and storm water run-off) to Lake Simcoe can be expected to meet both the PWQO's and LSEMS targets.

This framework has been further informed by the Lake Simcoe Assimilative Capacity Study (ACS) which measured existing phosphorus levels as well as expected levels based on approved development – down to the subwatershed level.

The Region has been pursuing the Environmental Assessment approvals for an expansion to the Keswick Sewage Treatment Plant. The Ministry of the Environment (MOE) requested further analyses related to the work the Region's consultants undertook. It is clear from the recent discussions that, while the preliminary results of this work look positive, it has not been compiled in written format and submitted to MOE for review. Both MAH and MOE are of the view that this step needs to occur prior to Region proceeding to adopt the regional official plan amendment or approve the Town's urban expansion amendment and secondary plan.

Similarly, it is our understanding that the LSRCA ran the Keswick Business Park through the ACS model to predict phosphorus loadings from this proposal – and related changes in loadings achieved by removing certain existing agricultural uses currently occurring in the business park location. Again, while the preliminary results appear positive, the analysis has not been written up nor shared with the Ministry of the Environment. Again, the Ministries are of the view that this needs to occur prior to moving forward with adoption and/or approval of the regional and town amendments.

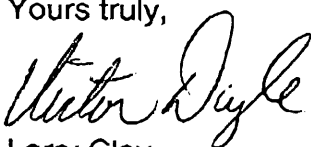
As a result, we request that Regional Council not proceed to provide final adoption to the regional official plan amendment at this time – which would entail not making a decision on the town official plan amendments as well. Rather, the steps above need to be completed and the review and discussions on these matters finalized. To this end, the Ministry does not require the Environmental Assessment to be completed. Rather, given the advanced status and positive nature of the preliminary results, it is not expected that conclusion of this part of the exercise will be unduly delayed and we are committed to working closely with the Region, Town and LSRCA to undertake this as expeditiously as possible.

Greenbelt Natural Heritage System

The other matter raised in the discussions dealt with the treatment of the Greenbelt Natural Heritage System (NHS). Having discussed the matter with the Town's consultants, the Ministry is not satisfied with the parameters that were used to refine the NHS. As a result, the time needed to complete the servicing assessment can be used to also complete discussions on this matter as well. If Regional Council determines to proceed, it is requested that a decision not be made on those portions of the secondary plan within the Greenbelt NHS. This would allow discussions to continue and revisions to be considered by both the Town and Region if appropriate.

If you have any questions, please call me directly at 416-585-7264.

Yours truly,

on
behalf of 
Larry Clay
Regional Director

c.c. B. Tuckey, Region of York
H. Lenters, Town of Georgina
A. Neary, MOE
M. Walters, LSRCA