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Bryan W. Tuckey
Commissioner of Planning & Development Services
Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge St.
Newmarket, Ontario
L3Y 6Z1

Re: Amendment No. 65 to the Official Plan of the King Township Planning Area

Dear Mr. Tuckey and Members of the Planning & Economic Development Committee:

I am writing today to express my continuing concerns and opposition to the development of the lands in King City known as the “Special Study Area” (SSA), located in the southeast quadrant of King City, Township of King.

For your background information, King City lies entirely within the Oak Ridges Moraine, adjacent to a significant recharge area, the headwaters of the East Humber River (a national heritage river) and a small portion of the watershed of the Don River.

Throughout the years 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1998, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), at the request of the Township of King, “volunteered its ecological expertise towards developing a natural heritage system for King City.”

“A natural heritage system is organized around three priorities (Riley and Mohr 1994):

- i) Landscape retention (Core conservation lands and waters)
- ii) Landscape restoration (Corridors and countryside)
- iii) Landscape replacement (Connecting links)”

A number of regenerating fields and farmland, within and surrounding the Environmental Protection Area (EPA), were designated, by MNR in 1995 and 1996, as being “restoration areas that are critical for the protection of significant and sensitive species and to enhance the ecological integrity of the core conservation lands by reducing edge effects and increasing the amount of forest interior habitat. These restoration areas are particularly important for the large core area of woodlands and wetlands in the southeastern portion of King City.”

It was noted by MNR in 1996 that “The King-Vaughan wetlands and associated woodlands in the southeastern portion of King City support one of the most significant natural areas in King Township. Its complex of wetlands and woodlands is the best such example in King City and one of the best examples in the entire MTRCA watershed. The lands sustain the largest woodlands in King City and its wetlands, as well as being part of a provincially significant wetland complex, are also some of the largest wetlands in King City. These lands are

noteworthy for their diversity of vegetation communities and their diverse flora and fauna. These include a high concentration of significant species, many of which are indicative of sites of high quality and low disturbance.”

However, following “a reconnaissance level assessment” (by his own admission) undertaken by the landowner’s consultant in February 1996, it was determined that development could occur within the large EPA and all of the designated Environmental Restoration Areas (EPAs), the SSA being the largest. Indeed the Land Use and Transportation Strategy Map of the Draft King City Community Plan, OPA #54, May 1996, shows all of the restoration areas as low density residential areas, which were later converted to SSAs in November 1996. In August 1997 the Region of York made modifications to OPA #54 to place 2 of the restoration/low density residential areas into rural designations but the largest Environmental Restoration Area remained as the only Special Study Area.

The approved OPA #54 recognizes that the SSA is an environmentally sensitive area as the permitted uses are those in the EPA designations. Through the Oak Ridges Moraine Conformity Exercise it appears that the Province, in 2004, removed the SSA and designated the area as Urban. Prior to this in 2003, York Region and King Township identified the SSA as a future service area to be serviced by the York Durham Sewer System, although the Official Plan Amendment that is before you today was not brought before King Council for approval until June of this year, following TRCA’s sign off on the Official Plan Amendment, the Zoning By-law Amendment and proposing 17 conditions of draft plan approval for Osmington’s Draft Plan of Subdivision which includes the Special Study Area.

I believe that Landscape restoration is an integral and essential part of a Sustainable Natural Heritage System, which is supported by York Region’s Official Plan and the vision of York Region’s Natural Heritage Strategic Directions Report. The southeast quadrant of King City has not seen any changes since MNR prepared the Natural Heritage System for that area in 1995 and 1996. Therefore I continue to support the Special Study Area being retained as an environmental restoration area that will give added protection to the adjacent Oak Ridges Moraine Natural Core lands, the provincially significant wetlands, the largest woodlands in King City and the diverse flora and fauna which include a high concentration of significant species.

In conclusion, I am aware that there is funding available from the City of Toronto, in excess of \$6 million, 2009, for source water protection which I believe could be accessed to acquire lands for the protection of the headwaters of the Humber River, as was accomplished in Nobleton a few years ago. The approved minutes of King Township’s Committee of the Whole Report, July 7, 2008 record an approved motion “to have the CAO approach the owners of the Special Study Area lands informally and report back to Committee at the next meeting.” I am hopeful that the Special Study Area can still be preserved as an environmental restoration area.

Thank you.

Respectfully yours,

Jane Underhill,
Councillor, Ward 5, Township of King