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July 24, 2015

Via email to shuycke@aurora.ca

Mayor and Members of Council
Town of Aurora
100 John West Way
Aurora, Ontario
L4G 6J1

Attention: Mr. Steven M. A. Huycke, Town Clerk

Dear Sir:

Re: Response by Highland Gate Developments Inc. to
Presentation by Highland Gate Ratepayers Association
Public Planning Meeting, June 24, 2015
Town File Numbers: SUB-2015-01; OPA-2015-01; ZBA-2015-02

I am writing on behalf of Highland Gate Developments Inc. (HGDI) to respond to submissions made to Council by the Highland Gate Ratepayers Association ("Ratepayers Association") at the Public Planning Meeting on June 24, 2015 in connection with the above-referenced applications by Highland Gate Developments Inc. ("Highland Gate").

On July 10th, representatives of HGDI met with representatives of the Ratepayers Association to discuss the matters raised in their June 24th submission. At the Association's request, we will meet again once they complete their research and due diligence investigations.

In the meantime, there are a number of points in the Association's presentation that require a response.

Notice to the Community

It was noted by Mr. Newton on behalf of the Ratepayers Association that when the course was closed in November 2014, the homeowners "surmised that a development application would soon follow." We wish to advise Council that even before the Clublink/Geranium joint venture was announced, we reached out to and met with the Executive of the Association, to advise that a development application would be filed in the future and that we were interested in establishing a dialogue with the community through the Association. We met with members of the Executive on December 22, 2014

before the public announcement of the joint-venture on December 23rd and again on January 21, 2015, before the applications were filed on February 27, 2015.

Amending the Official Plan

Mr. Newton's presentation referred to the Town's Official Plan and By-law as "being set aside". We disagree with this characterization. Not only does the Planning Act contemplate and permit landowners to file applications to amend the Official Plan and Zoning By-law, but the Town's own Official Plan contemplates redevelopment of these lands. The Private Parkland designation in the Town's OP anticipates that the use of lands so designated may change over time.

Section 12.4 of the Aurora Official Plan sets out the policies related to Private Parkland. Policy 12.4.3e) states as follows:

"When private open space is proposed to be developed for another use, Council may require:

- i) An evaluation of the environmental impact;*
- ii) Evidence that the proposed use is compatible with the surrounding uses;*
- iii) An Official Plan, Secondary Plan and/or Zoning Bylaw amendment; and*
- iv) A Plan of Subdivision and development agreement, including the approval of the applicable agencies."*

New Streets Next to Existing Properties

The Ratepayers Association opposes the location of the new streets behind existing homes. We have already provided ample justification for the location of the new streets in the materials filed with the applications. We note that in no instance will the pavement of the new streets abut an existing property. The paved surface of the new streets will be 6.0 or 7.5 metres wide within a 17.5 metre public right-of-way. The remainder of the right-of-way will contain landscaping, including street trees, rain gardens (bioswales) and other vegetation plantings.

There will be more than adequate distance between the existing property line and the paved surface of the new street. In many cases there is additional buffer width adjacent to the 17.5 metre right-of-way and in some cases this distance will be equivalent to a home's rear yard.

Tree Removal, Preservation and Transplanting

We do not agree with the statement made that "thousands of mature trees will be removed". A full tree inventory was conducted and a tree preservation plan has been prepared based on the advice of expert landscape architects and arborists. The neighbours are being consulted as we refine the plan.

Pedestrian Trail Network

The Ratepayers Association criticized the fact that some of the new trail network would be on sidewalks. It was suggested that the entire trail system be off-street. This is simply not reasonable and not required. The Town's own Trails Master Plan (2011) states that "One of the objectives of the Aurora Trails Master Plan is to develop a trail network that is ***off-road wherever possible***, recognizing that in some cases an off-road alignment is not possible even in the long term" (emphasis added).

A 7.3-kilometre pedestrian network is proposed, of which 4.37 kilometres are off-street recreational trails to be constructed throughout the open space system. In addition, a total of 2.94 kilometres of sidewalks will form part of the connected pedestrian circulation network. Approximately 60 percent of the new proposed trail network is comprised of off-street trails.

The northern segment of the network, the main "Town-Wide Spine Trail", consists of 2.5 kilometres including a potential linkage through the Tannery Creek area. More than 85% of that Trail segment is off-street.

Not only will a high percentage of the proposed trails be off-street, but the Town will realize these trail linkages well in advance of when the Official Plan envisioned them in the 2035-2060 timeframe.

Density and Intensification

The Ratepayers Association suggested that Highland Gate is using density as an "excuse" to develop in Aurora. We disagree. As is readily apparent from the substantial material filed in support of the application, the proposed development complies with and implements provincial and regional intensification policies.

Using the Golf Course

The statement that the private golf course lands "have always been used and enjoyed by the public when the course is closed for the day or the season" is simply an admission of acts of trespassing. It is not right or lawful. Only when the redevelopment is complete and the approximately 48 acres (approximately 48 percent of the site) of planned public parkland, trails and open space have been conveyed to the Town, will the public be able to legally enjoy the space.

Building on the Golf Course Lands

The Ratepayers Association suggests that because the lands have been used as a golf course for some time the proposed plan should not be approved. We note, however, that many of the Highland Gate homes that exist today are on lands that were formerly used as a golf course.

The Oak Ridges Moraine

The Ratepayers Association believes that because a portion of the property is situated within the Oak Ridges Moraine, it cannot be developed. That is not true. Highland Gate is complying fully with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. Some of the lands proposed for housing are within a Settlement Area in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (the balance of the lands are within a Settlement Area outside of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan). This designation permits urban development subject to certain criteria. The materials filed with the application evaluate those criteria and demonstrate compliance with them.

Conclusion

We hope that Council finds this response useful in its deliberations.

I am taking the liberty of enclosing the set of responses to the comments and questions raised by the community at the Public Meeting prepared by our technical team. A copy of this response document was provided to the Ratepayers Association at our meeting with them on July 10th, both in hard copy and digitally. The document is also posted on our website www.highlandgateaurora.com.

As a courtesy we have copied Mr. Newton on this letter, as a follow up to our meeting on July 10th meeting.

Yours very truly,

GERANIUM CORPORATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Cheryl Shindruk". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Cheryl Shindruk, MCP, MCIP, RPP
Executive Vice President, Land Development

Encl.

Copy: Mr. Dave Newton, President, Highland Gate Ratepayers Association
Mr. Marco Ramunno, Director of Planning and Development Services