

March 25, 2024

Presentation by Stewarttown Community Association to Council

Good afternoon: your worship, council members, staff, and members of the public. My name is Sam Mercurio, Acting President of the Stewarttown Community Association.

We wish to thank the Council and Staff for taking the time to meet with our association regarding the Expansion Lands in Stewarttown.

The Stewarttown Community Association was recently formed to represent the residents of Stewarttown, the oldest hamlet in Halton Hills. We are incorporated as a not-for-profit organization created to provide a strong voice to issues facing our neighbourhood including development, traffic, and safety.

Section D6.3.5 of the Town's official plan - regarding the Stewarttown Special Character Area states that "It is the policy of this Plan that the expansion area to the community of Stewarttown shall be developed as a low-density residential neighbourhood, in keeping with the character of the existing community of Stewarttown. Our association believes the character of the hamlet includes its history and its rural nature.

Our community has a rich history dating back to 1819. Some of the streets in our neighbourhood are named after the earliest settlers. The township was absorbed into Halton Hills in 1974. There are 8 homes on Stewarttown Road, Mill Pond Road, and 15 Side Road that have received formal recognition of their cultural heritage value under the Ontario Heritage Act. They are linked to the 19th century development of Stewarttown as a prominent mill town in Esquesing Township. At one point, the Town Hall in Stewarttown was in consideration to become the Town Hall for what would become Halton Hills. The site is now the home of Georgetown Little Theatre, a major contributor to entertainment in Halton Hills for over 60 years.

Also part of the character of the hamlet is its rural nature which includes a density ranging from 2.2 to 3.6 homes per hectare. When our residents return home, they breathe a sigh of relief, as they feel they have left the big city and returned to an oasis with Halton Hills. A walk through our community includes a hidden waterfall on Mill Pond Road, an abundance of flora and wildlife that includes coyotes, foxes, rabbits, and rare trees including black walnut and butternut trees.

The Stewarttown Community Association acknowledges that there is a need for more housing in Ontario, including Halton Hills. We are not against development. However, we feel that the density in the Expansion lands should remain low enough to help us maintain the character of our hamlet as noted in the Town's official plan.

Our residents have had many lengthy discussions regarding the expansion lands including the density and access points. In a survey conducted several months ago, the overwhelming majority of our residents felt the peace and quiet, and the safety of our neighbourhood, was integral to the character of our community.

After initial discussions with our residents, the consensus was that we would have preferred a single access point from the southern point of the expansion lands. After further research and discussion with the staff and Town Council, our Association has come to understand that such an access would not be feasible due to environmental and cost concerns. Our association accepts that the entrance to the Expansion Lands will need to be from Harrison Place.

We appreciate that Town Staff and the Consultant are recommending a density of 8 units per hectare. However, our association strongly feels that the character of the hamlet is best maintained if we reduce the density to 5 units per hectare, as recommended in Concept 1A or the low end of Concept 1B as described at the June 2023 meeting. This density would help us maintain the character of our hamlet, and somewhat allay the concerns of our residents regarding traffic and safety.

The density we recommend would be a compromise between Staff suggestions, and the current density of approximately 2.9 units / hectare, but would still nearly double the present density, and double the number of homes in our community.

Our association would be in complete support of the proposed Secondary Plan with the reduced density. We hope you keep our residents and our recommendations in mind when finalizing the Stewarttown Secondary Plan. We look forward to working with the Town in the future to improve the community of Stewarttown.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.