

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

3.9 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING – Medway Valley Heritage Forest Environmentally Significant Area (OZ-9367)

- Councillor Squire: We will go to the staff report, which I think was contained in the Added Agenda.
- Councillor Squire: I will turn it over to the Committee for technical questions, please. All right, I have one question and that is Green Acres Drive, I'm just understanding, I know you've made comments about the Elsie Perrin Williams Estate area and Gloucester Drive, what's happening with Green Acres Drive in terms of there seemed to be some belief that there was going to be access there. Somebody can answer that?
- Gregg Barrett: The Green Acres Drive access is still identified within the Conservation Master Plan, on the trail mapping that was done the link and, I apologize, the Green Acres access is to remain, what is before you, I believe in Clause B, is the deferral of the completion of that link pending some further study. The Conservation Master Plan still identifies a pathway linkage there, but the actual location of that and the level of that pathway would be deferred subject to some further consultation with the Advisory Committees and with neighbours, as Ms. Williams indicated in her presentation.
- Councillor Squire: Thank you, anything else? All right we will go to the public then, I know there is a list, am I to follow that list at this point, should I start there? All right, let's do that then, go ahead, you're in the Committee Room, so go ahead.
- George Sinker: Thank you, Mr. Chair, my name is George Sinker and I reside at 1597 Gloucester Road with my wife Sydney, and myself, Tom Tillmann and Holden Rhodes have been involved in an ad hoc committee to represent the Medway Heights ratepayer's with respect to this matter and we've had email chains keeping them up to date with what's been going on so, I would tell you that I believe we have substantial concurrence with my remarks from the majority of residents in Medway Heights. Firstly, I would like to thank our Ward Councillor, Josh Morgan, Deputy Mayor, for the assistance that he's provided throughout and his liaising with the staff, it's been very helpful. In addition, we've had yourself, Councillor Squire, and Councillor Lehman, who have actually walked the area to get a better handle on what is going on there, so we are very thankful for the collaborative approach that staff have taken on this, and I think that this is going to lead to making a good plan great. By way of background, my family has had the privilege of living adjacent to the Medway Valley for 36 years, we did see degradation of the Valley when the trunk sewers were installed in the early 1980's, and the creation of the utility quarter. Those affected areas have never fully recovered, despite tree planting and other attempts at remedial measures. Hopefully, time and good management will bring these areas back. As you know, the Provincial Policy Statement, as it relates to natural heritage areas, states that natural heritage areas will be protected for the long term and that they should be maintained and restored, and, where possible, improved. Those policies are carried forward in the London Plan, and as you know, Council is required to make decisions consistent with those policies; accordingly, where there's a conflict, natural heritage trumps access. It is with that backdrop that we suggest certain amendments to the CMP, and we would like to laser focus on those amendments. I believe when staff was asked about Green Acres, respectfully, when that question was raised, they didn't get it correct. They were mixing and matching with Gloucester. With respect to Green Acres access, public use of that Green Acres access is problematic; for fifty years there have been two paved driveways sitting on that unopened lane and, in addition, there's a brick wall that crosses the entire width of that proposed access. In addition, there is a pool house that is located on that access, so we suggest that it wouldn't be equitable at this time, although perhaps legal, it wouldn't be equitable at this point in time to open that access point. As you may know, due to the advent of title insurance, it's quite probable that the owners who purchased those properties did so innocently without having an up-to-date

survey showing those encroachments. So, we suggest that this access not be opened and that it be deleted from the CMP, and that discussion of that access in Emily's paper, staff's paper, was not a request for a deferral, it was a request that that access be opened, so I'm stating just the opposite, that it be left, that it be closed due to those encroachments, and if the adjoining owners wish to apply for encroachment agreements, that's really up to them, not up to the city. With respect to the Gloucester Road access, that is the access that is being deferred this evening, as appendix B to your proposed motion, there is a map of the Gloucester access, and the request is that it be deferred this evening. I'd just like to tell you a little bit about that Gloucester access, because it is adjacent to me, immediately to the west, and I knew that when I purchased the property; it's a Level One access and a beautiful hiking trail. I recommend that it not be increased to a Level Two access, because that trail is a looped trail; in essence it is a trail to nowhere at the bottom of the valley. In addition, access to the valley floor at my location is very steep, and in my conversations and our committees' conversations with our professional advisors and the representative from Upper Thames who sat on the committee, we were advised by UTRCA that if that trail were to be improved with gravel or...

- Councillor Squire: You are at your five minutes, I know what you're saying is coming from your neighborhood, it's important, so I'm prepared to go a little while, but I just want you to understand that we have parameters and it's usually five minutes.
- George Sinker: I will be brief. We've had an architect look at that path and we've been advised that if wooden switchbacks were constructed, based on AODA requirements, the minimum length of the ramp that would be required would be 770 feet at a 10% slope and it would require handrails and guardrails, and at a slope of 20%, it would require a 1,300-foot ramp to get down into that valley. We realize that these decisions on access have been deferred; however, if those switchbacks were to be installed in the valley, they would do severe damage to the natural heritage there and none of us want that. We're trying to preserve this valley; it's a good Master Plan, but with the Green Acres access deleted and with this access left at a Level One, it will be a great Master Plan. The only technical correction I saw in the report is that the implementation date in the report talks about 2018-2028, when in fact it should probably now be 2021-2031, so I'd ask that you consider making that update as well. I thank you for your time, thank you, sorry for going over a little bit, I know it's late, but it's quite important to us and we have been patient this evening. Thank you.
- Councillor Squire: Thank you very much. Is there anyone else in the Committee Room who is going to speak? If you are, you will want to come to the microphone.
- Jerri Bunn: There are no more speakers in the room.
- Councillor Squire: All right, so we'll go to the those who are online.
- Sandy Levin: It's Sandy Levin, I was hoping that perhaps Jackie or Susan and Michael would speak first as part of our delegation.
- Councillor Squire: Go ahead.
- Michael Dawthorne: Sure, I am happy to Sandy. It's Michael Dawthorne. Jackie Madden and myself represented ACCAC throughout this process, actually, I've been involved in this process for well over a decade I think since I first became involved. This round we worked collaboratively with some of the members from EEPAC and tried to find solutions that we thought everyone benefited from that protected the environment and protected the entire valley. It has never been anyone's intention to do damage to the valley, what we have sought is an ability to have as many people safely and responsibly as possible enjoy the valley and I really do believe that we've come to a plan that actually does accomplish that. I'd like to thank everybody who's been involved, City staff, the EEPAC members, as well as Jackie on this, and as well as everybody here tonight for sitting through a very long meeting. Sandy, I'll turn it over to you for your comments as well.

- Sandy Levin: Thank you Michael, I share a lot of Michael's compliments to City staff and staff from the Upper Thames. This was an excellent process, and as has been mentioned, we have a very good plan here and I appreciate Mr. Sinker's comments, but I want to call to the Committee's attention the challenge that we faced with the east side of the Medway is and, I'm afraid I don't have it, I believe it's page 943 of your agenda, which is Figure 4B, and if you look at the map just to the west of A12, there is an informal trail, an unmanaged trail that was recommended for closure 25 years ago and it goes through an environmentally significant part of the valley, as well as across private property, and we're challenged to find an alternative so that people no longer do that and that's the idea behind the deferral, to try and find a way to get there. If you close, as an option, the unopen road allowance, I'm going to be challenged to figure out how do we provide that opportunity for an alternative. We've done very good work collaboratively and cooperatively during Covid and I'd like to think that this recommendation that's before you can go forward. If you want to look at the Green Acres access as part of the deferral, sure, but to totally eliminate it at this stage would be premature. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

- Councillor Squire: Thank you very much. Other members of the public? Is somebody on the line?

- Heather Davis: Heather Davis...hello?

- Councillor Squire: Heather Davis, I'm sorry, I didn't hear that clearly. Go ahead, you have five minutes to speak.

- Heather Davis: Thank you. I'm on 1500 Ryersie Road, been here for 56 years, so I've gone through a whole lot with the Elsie Perrin Estate and the trails and Medway creek. My understanding now is that the City has hired, or whatever, the Thames valley is in charge of, they've hired them to look after the Medway Valley and I spoke to someone there that was parked in the, in what we call "the blind" at the end of, the west end of Windermere, that goes down into the valley, it used to be called "dead horse canyon"; horses went through on the horse trails and so on. We had safe trails down there and they were marked accordingly by, "simple" and "more advanced", there were three divisions. My concern is safety issues at Windermere and Ryersie, because the so-called area that is covered by the City takes in the that blind area that was for emergency vehicles only, and the signage was put up as such. It's now become a parking in that area, the signage is gone as far as no parking there, the parking is unsafe, there's a bit of a ditch there, they block and come out onto Windermere facing west, excuse me facing east, as well as coming up Ryersie, blocking the visibility of that corner. Now a number of years ago, Bill Watkins, because of the safety and unsafety of it, I mean the cars were whistling right into the bank of Windermere Estate or coming up Windermere, they were ending up on the fire hydrant. And certainly living through that and helping them with changing ropes and getting their vehicles back on the road, as I say I see a safety issue there for sure and the pedestrian, there's no sidewalks, which is what the people want, but Bill Watkins at that time he, I don't know what you call it, but he curved the road in such a way that it was rounded, and because of the wet pavement in snow and ice and so on, the drainage he has going down to the ditch, and, ultimately through the estate, as well under Windermere Road, and I too have a ditch at the back of my property in the protected area, but it seems as though there's a whole lot more traffic in the area both car traffic, pedestrian traffic and a lot of pedestrian, being that the University teams are up here with their bicycling teams, whatever, conditioning, and the runners are up here and, whatever, as well as in the estate, parking is definitely a problem here for getting into the trail on the west end of Windermere and they are parking on the street. I cannot get out of my driveway when they are parking on Ryersie, in front of my property, I can't get out, I can't see, the visibility is just not there and having the cars, the zoom, zoom, zoom, cars go flying around that corner, it is unsafe.

- Councillor Squire: You have one minute left.

- Heather Davis: And, indeed, I informed and sent the incident report of a very horrific accident that happened; it took out twelve feet of a cedar hedge, as well as went

through three properties, two across the road from me and a bit on my property, as well as almost taking out two adults. So, safety, I'm a nurse, I see the possibility of serious accidents unless we have better signage and the fellow from the Thames Valley was in the park, he mentioned a couple of things that could be done, one of which was very clever I thought, was the speed bumps and putting in those and putting back signage of no parking. I did have a sign to the north of me on the telephone pole and that was there for years and years, but Hydro, Rogers and Bell did some something with the transformer, that sign came off...

- Councillor Squire: Your time is up so if you could just wrap up that would be great.
- Heather Davis: Yes, so again I just want to point out the extreme safety that is in this area, and particularly on the curve that comes around Windermere onto Ryersie. Thank you so much.
- Councillor Squire: Thank you very much. Next speaker? Do we have anyone? Okay, that's the public participation, so I need a motion to close the public participation meeting.