

October 12, 2020



E-NEWS BLAST **SOUTH LAKE SIMCOE NATURALISTS**

**Breaking News: Ford Government makes it Clear –
“They will not support York Region Council’s
shocking attack on the Greenbelt”.**

Greenbelt Conservation ensured! Celebrate.

In a 11 to 4 vote, the morning meeting of October 8th by York Region Council to proceed to continue their shocking attack on the Greenbelt, concern reigned everywhere about conservation, wildlife, natural heritage and food lands in the Greenbelt. Following this meeting in York, at Queen’s Park in Toronto the position of the Province made it clear that they would not support York Region Council’s action (resolution).

I have been advised in response to a question about York Region launches Shocking attack on the Greenbelt, Minister Steve Clark , Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, responded in Queen’s Park, later in the day of October 8th, “*Speaker, and I can tell the members of the House and every head of council and every councillor in every community across Ontario that if you’re going to give us a request to develop property within the greenbelt, we have one short answer: No”.*

Adam Wilson, Director of Communications for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, (has) said the province is fully

committed to protecting the Greenbelt and is not considering proposals to remove lands from its protection.

Sound science and good planning appear to clearly be supported by the present Government of Ontario to save the Greenbelt. Enjoyable news for a great Thanksgiving weekend!

Background:

Georgina Mayor Margaret Quirk voted against the resolution, “The province has been very clear in saying that they’re not interested in opening the Greenbelt, and I think we need to listen to that.”

The vote was approved by 11 members of council, with Taylor, Mrakas, Quirk, Hamilton, and Markham Regional Coun. Jack Heath voting against.

Georgina Regional Councillor, Rob Grossi voted for the resolution.

“East Gwillimbury Mayor Virginia Hackson also spoke in favour of the resolution, saying 600 acres in her municipality could be future business park area, with at least 6,000 new jobs, 4.5-million square feet of non-residential building space and up to \$3 million in additional annual property taxes”.

The municipality of East Gwillimbury landscape is hydrologically important to the Greenbelt being source area headwaters of South Lake Simcoe rivers, groundwater resources, and eventually the waters of Lake Simcoe. Any suggestion of development in the protected countryside in this municipality should be vigorously opposed.

It is very concerning the apparent lack of understanding of science, geography and planning of the majority of York Regional Council members and presumably Regional staff in the importance of conserving the extent and integrity of the Greenbelt in the year 2020.

Paul Harpley SLSN

Sources: Hansard, York Media News and Newmarket Today News items, York Region Council Meeting – Zoom video.

Letter (SLSN) to area municipal Politicians ahead of the October 8th York Region Council meeting. Members were urged in our October 6th E-News Blast Conservation issues.



SOUTH LAKE SIMCOE NATURALISTS

SLSN is a Not-for-profit Member of Ontario Nature.

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Margaret Quirk, Mayor, Town of Georgina

Rob Grossi, Regional Councillor, Town of Georgina

Re: York Region launches Shocking attack on the Greenbelt: Eleven groups call on the Premier to take immediate action.

Dear Mayor Quirk and Regional Councillor Grossi:

I have been very recently made aware of a disturbing action of York Region Council of which you are members, regarding a vote on a proposal to request that the provincial government open the Greenbelt to development, as per details related in the recent

Environmental Defence Liveable Communities Press Release “York Region launches Shocking attack on the Greenbelt:...” (in SLSN E-News Blast 2020-10-06).

This action by York Region Council members is very concerning. The obvious reasons this is not a good idea are many and the document attached relates a number of serious concerns. The health of Lake Simcoe and its tributary rivers has been a long-term focus of SLSN. Over many years our organization has contributed data to many research programmes and inventory projects like the Atlas of Breeding Birds, the Atlas of Reptiles and Amphibians, landscape ecology research and others informing the science (through journal papers, book chapters and conference presentations) of the Greenbelt, and Oak Ridges Moraine in the South Lake Simcoe area.

In June 1991 SLSN planned and convened an early, major event “Lake Simcoe Conference and Festival” in Georgina at the Baldwin conference centre. Attendees came from all around Lake Simcoe and beyond. Key presenters from SLSN, LSRCA, Ontario Universities and municipal, provincial, and federal politicians including two Ministers of Environment (provincial and federal) contributed to sessions and workshops. This early Lake Simcoe event like others through the years, helped initiate and inform the eventual establishment of the Greenbelt, and the Oak Ridges Moraine Acts and Plans.

The SLSN have contributed for almost 30 years to many planning and research programs including the Lake Simcoe Act and Plan (LSAP), the Lake Simcoe Clean-Up Fund (LSCUF), the Oak Ridge Moraine Plan, the Greenbelt Plan and many municipal Official and Secondary Plans. **All these landuse planning policy and associated tools are interrelated, work together, and should not be weakened or piecemeal breached as York Region Council is proposing on October 8th with their vote to request that the provincial government open the Greenbelt to development. It is concerning that this request and vote by York Region Council members has advanced this far without our knowledge, and many others it would seem. I will be investigating further relating to good planning and process. I expect you will be voting against this action.**



Paul Harpley, BSc. (Hons.) M.A.

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Director, The Zephyr Society of Lake Simcoe, Research

Recipient: 1995 Canada 125 Medal – Rouge River Valley Conservation Recipient

Recipient: 2012 Lieutenant Governor’s Ontario Heritage Award for Lifetime Achievement

Member, Public Advisory Committee, 2007-2017 Federal Lake Simcoe and/South-eastern Georgian Bay Clean-Up Fund LSGBCUF

Fellow International, The Explorers Club

c.c. Ward 1 Councillor - Mike Waddington

Dr. Anne Bell, Ontario Nature

Ward 2 Councillor - Dan Fellini

Allan Braude, Environmental Defence

Ward 3 Councillor - Dave Neeson

Ward 4 Councillor - Frank Sebo

Ward 5 Councillor - Dave Harding

Caroline Mulroney, MPP York-Simcoe, Minister of Transportation. Minister of Francophone Affairs

