

# Midhurst Development News

## February 2016 update

### **Status today**

Thanks to Midhurst residents coming out in force during the last election, Springwater has a new council. Although the new team may not be entitled to reverse earlier OMB decisions, they can at least now insist that any development which takes place in Midhurst, shall comply with all OMB conditions affecting the environment and financial stability - to *"the satisfaction of the Township"*.

Council has embarked upon a Long Term Financial Plan which among other things, will determine Springwater's ability to finance three Midhurst development scenarios, these being:

- a) full development of 10,000 homes
- b) the first conditionally approved 3,850 homes and
- c) small developments in line with historical Springwater growth.

Council is not obliged to sign any building permits which might burden Springwater with large debts. And, in a unanimous vote, the new council voted NOT to support the allocation of any more population over and above that required for the first 3,850 new Midhurst homes.

The balance of the development is currently the subject of an OMB appeal by other developers, by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and by the Midhurst Ratepayers' Association.

### **Midhurst Ratepayers' Association**

The MRA is now engaged in a major fundraising campaign to cover the significant cost of the OMB case, plus paying for the legal and planning expertise needed to guide our countermeasures. To prosecute their goals, developers and their lawyers continue to distribute propaganda aimed at convincing people that the Midhurst Secondary Plan (OPA 38) is a done deal. If this were true, why spend time and money lobbying politicians and fighting us at the OMB?

OPA 38 is not a done deal, but it is still alive and we need your help to continue the fight.

### **How can the public help?**

MRA needs help in the following areas:

- Fund raising and event planning. We need to raise many thousands of \$\$s.
- Photography, videography and editing
- Article and song writing
- Web content
- Canvassing
- Attending public council meetings
- Spreadsheet database maintenance
- Bookkeeping

### **Why should I donate?**

Compare your property taxes and your local traffic with that of Barrie.

Beware Springwater - higher taxes and debts historically follow developments which are not spawned by employment needs.

### **History**

The Township of Springwater Official Plan Amendment #38 (OPA 38) proposes to add 10,000 new homes to Midhurst (currently only 1,200 homes). These new homes would accommodate approximately 28,000 people in three new neighbourhoods surrounding the village. The majority of these homes would be either detached, with a frontage of 40ft or less, or townhouses. To handle the anticipated 8 times volume of traffic, OPA 38 proposes to widen many existing roads and to add 8 sets of traffic signals or roundabouts. Only one new arterial road is proposed. Traffic problems would be comparable to South Barrie.

The new sub-divisions would be on *prime agricultural land* and the entire volume of treated effluent would be discharged into Willow Creek, 1km upstream of the Minesing Swamp - an internationally significant wetland.

### **What do residents think?**

On April 16, 2012, we presented the Township of Springwater with a petition bearing 1,476 handwritten signatures of those opposed to the development.

### **Why should Springwater residents care about OPA 38?**

Traffic and taxes affect us all. It is a common myth that growth brings prosperity from development charges and from the increased tax base. Although it is true that development brings additional tax revenue and new jobs, it brings more problems than prosperity. Developments mean huge infrastructure expenses and more people competing for the same jobs. As reported by Hemson, the consultants to the Township and to the County, growth does not pay for growth.

A quick comparison of property taxes in nearby Barrie, which has already experienced significant growth, confirms this point. Barrie taxes are higher, in some cases by 50%, than in Springwater. (All costs in Springwater are shared across the whole Township). If OPA 38 proceeds, Springwater **taxes will definitely increase.**

*\* Note. The infrastructure deficit in Toronto is well known. Two areas with the largest growth, happen to also have the largest debts. Peel Region has a debt in excess of \$1.6 billion. York region's debt is \$2.8 billion and its credit rating was recently downgraded.*