

Land for flood mitigation is not surplus

Dear Editor:

At the February 20th Council Meeting, Town of Minto Councillors voted to begin the proceedings to dispose of land that currently abuts a retention pond behind George Street North in Harriston. The intention is to sell the land to allow the addition of up to four units in a proposed townhouse development.

Ironically, while Council was in that meeting making the decision to dispose of land that once was deemed necessary and useful for stormwater and flood management, several houses on George Street North were taking on water in basements due to the rain event and a drain system that had been overwhelmed – for the second time in nine months. Sadly, some had just finished repairing the damage from the June 2017 flooding event. Earlier, students walking home from Minto-Clifford Public School on the designated walking path were turned back for their general safety.

On March 6th, Council is preparing to officially declare land once previously slated as flood retention pond as surplus to sell to be developed. One definition of surplus land is land that is not currently needed to support the existing development and may not contribute value.

We strongly feel that in light of the recent and previous flooding events, the impact on existing and future taxpayers and the general risk of public safety, Council should postpone declaring the land surplus until it can be properly investigated that the land is not part of the solution for future flood management and mitigation. Consider the value the land holds to the Municipality if increasing the size of the retention pond to the fullest capacity, slows the water draining into the overwhelmed systems and spares the neighbourhood of further future devastation. Minto Council - if you vote to declare the land as surplus on March 6th, you are washing one potential solution down the drain, unlike the flood waters that have no place to go.

Rolf and Kerri Schuttel
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