

Burlington 'dropped the ball'

Three-lane Waterdown Road won't work, McCarthy insists

By Eric McGuinness

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Flamborough Councillor Margaret McCarthy calls Burlington councillors "disingenuous and duplicitous" -- in other words, insincere and deceitful -- in asking that city's staff to again study a three-lane Waterdown Road rather than the four-lane expansion recommended by traffic planners.

Her attack on Burlington Mayor Cam Jackson and councillors who voted 6-1 Monday night for another look at a three-lane option came at a meeting of Hamilton's economic development and planning committee yesterday that dealt with plans for thousands of new homes to be built in Waterdown North.

McCarthy complained that, "Burlington council last night again dropped the ball on the transportation corridor. Their position is not defensible."

About 6,500 homes and 15,000 residents are to be added to Waterdown as the result of a 2002 cabinet ruling. As a result, more traffic capacity is required up and down the escarpment between Waterdown and Aldershot and Hamilton developers are ready to pay 95 per cent of the \$15-million cost.

But McCarthy warns that Burlington taxpayers may have to bear the full expense if that city doesn't go along with findings of a joint study that recommended expanding Waterdown Road to four lanes.

She also notes that the new owner of the former Paletta lands in Waterdown South -- a development that will be marketed as Waterdown Bay -- is appealing to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) over delay in approvals resulting from the lack of adequate transportation routes.

Michael Telawski of Trinison Management Corp. of Vaughan, development manager for Waterdown Bay, said the appeal filed four months ago is ready to proceed as soon as the OMB sets a hearing date.

"To say we're extremely disappointed in what happened last night (Monday night in Burlington) is an understatement. The City of Hamilton, Conservation Halton, Halton Region and the Niagara Escarpment Commission all accepted findings of the study last year.

"It's clear (Burlington) staff said four lanes is the only option that offers the solution that was needed, but council yet again referred it to staff to report on the viability of three lanes. We believe staff already

reported three doesn't solve the problem."

Telawski predicted the region, conservation authority and escarpment commission will all reject the other part of Jackson's proposal, to turn King Road into an "environmentally sensitive parkway."

The mayor's alternative is "almost set up to fail," he said.

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