

## 1400 Word Bedtime Story about 1400 Baseline Road

Written by Viv Saunders

This is a story of a new world, one in which fairy-tale legends and modern life collide.

Once upon a time, in an area of the far reaches of the great City of Hamilton, there was a land-use planning change that was causing a great divide.

Many years ago, the people of Ontario owned 4 surplus lands along the Queen Elizabeth Way of Ward 10. The Knights of the Round Table purchased one of these plots for the people of Hamilton for \$1,000,000.

After trying to decide what to do with the land, the previous Knights of the Round Table determined they didn't need the lands after all and deemed the land surplus. They wished to sell it for a small profit at the time. But upon hearing they would have to give any profits back to the people of Ontario, they held on to this vacant remnant land until the 10-year contractual obligation expired.

In the interim, the people of Ontario amended the rules and now require 20 years. Fortunately for this Round Table though, this amendment did not apply to this land which was grandfathered by the rules at the time of purchase.

Once the 10-year contract did expire, the new Knights of the Round Table formally decided to sell the people's land.

"We need the money" they said.

"We need money for sidewalks, streetlights, affordable housing & other priorities", they say.

"We want to change the designation from a cap of 29 units per hectare to allow 99 units per hectare ", they say. Even though the people who have bought into this low-density neighbourhood did so thinking a gathering spot of some sort would be built there long, long ago.

"We can house more people if we change the zoning to introduce a 9-storey apartment building" they say.

"We can introduce a 'more affordable' housing form into the neighbourhood" they say. Such as condo apartments that are predominantly high cost 2ndary market rentals along the lakeshore.

"We can sell the land for north of \$3,000,000" the Land Baron says and "any funds remaining after we put sidewalks, lights & other transportation infrastructure in , can be allocated to 'affordable housing'" the Magistrate said

"Noooo", the people impacted said. "We don't want you to spend our property taxes this way. We don't want you to sell our public lands in this fashion"

"We'd like you to address the Affordable Housing Crisis and we'd like you to develop our publicly owned land for housing", most of the people said

"We don't want an outlier high-rise building in a sea of low-rise buildings on this last remnant piece of car-dependent land", the people yelled.

"We will fight this", the people agreed. "We will take this to a higher court"

“Go ahead” said some of the Knights of the Round Table members. “We have made our decision and we have a pot of the people’s money that we will spend to fight you back” is what the people heard.

“But the process here doesn’t illustrate conformity to the Official Plan and other provincial regulations”, the people’s professional planner stated.

“There is significant delay & queuing forecasted on the Queen Elizabeth interchange ramps which results in safety concerns”, Sir Jeffery stated in regard to a development in the area.

As per the Ministry’s input, “The intersection of Fifty Road & South Service Road does not have the capacity to accommodate the proposed density” for that recently approved development, the people noted.

The people can see and read that: the Queuing available storage of 139m at the MTO controlled intersections QEW/Fifty Road has been substantially exceeded with the recent approval of another development. The TIS from that assessment indicates queuing of 149.3m, 182 metres and **as high as 229.6 metre queuing lengths** forecasted during peak hours for westbound vehicles during a.m.& pm weekdays as well as Saturday peak hours.

“Please explain to us how the Knights can consider adding to this obvious and mounting issue when the process is void of the required planning studies such as a Traffic Impact Study?”, the people asked.

“But wait”, said the Town Crier.

“A great deal has changed since the Knights of the Round Table first directed their subjects to divest this public land.

The pandemic hit and the people the Knights were elected to represent are wanting rooms for home office space.

The Growth Plan has changed. The Plan has put emphasis on ‘ground-oriented housing’ and has moved away from apartment condo style housing to meet the needs of population growth.

The Knights of the Round Table are wanting to develop lands within the urban boundary to meet the ‘ground-oriented housing’ targets.

Plus, the Knights of the Round Table just approved a higher density development in December which negatively impacts the safety of that transportation network as per comments in that file”

The Town Crier wants to know “Why can’t we look to other developments on the Mountain and down the line (1288 Baseline) and put together a collaborative plan?”

“Why can’t we zone for maisonettes and find a partner to build ‘attainable’ housing? ”, the Town Crier asked.

“What’s ‘attainable’ housing”, the Knights of the Round Table asked. To which the Town Crier answered, “Housing that would meet the Knights of the Round Table’s definition of ‘affordable’, and that are a mix of 80%/100%/125% market pricing or capped at 90% of market as we have done elsewhere”

“YES”, said Sir Micheal.

“Building maisonettes would positively impact assessment values & I estimate would generate ~ \$200,000 more per year in property tax revenue vs the proposed mixed towns/apartment development presented. A ‘maisonette’ plan could result in positive tax shifts for all the people of Hamilton lands for years to come. I think what the Town Crier is trying to say, is whether or not it is still the will of the Knights of the Round Table to take our lottery winnings now, in cash; or whether choosing a Cash for Life option might be a more financially prudent & sustainable course of action?”

“YES”, said Sir Jason.

“A maisonette proposal will provide housing for approximately the same amount of people, 205 versus 217 people, & would be an option that is consistent with the new Growth Plan & Provincial Policy Statements”

“YES”, said Sir Stevan.

“The area is predominantly singles, semis, street and block townhomes. Introducing maisonettes is a housing form not found in the area & will meet the intent of the Official Plan policies in regard to infill developments in established neighbourhoods”

“YES”, said Sir Edward.

“A development that is pegged to CMHC market would be deemed Affordable Housing as per our city by-law. Knights of the Round Table has the opportunity to control the eventual build and insist upon housing that the present market demands & meets the needs of mid-income households”

“YES”, said the Housing Crusaders.

“Adjusting the previous direction to align with today’s environment is the right thing to do. Changing the plan will avoid spending more taxpayer funded resources at the OLT & will result in avoiding delays of adding to the housing supply. We say Yes to a faster build”

“YES”, said the Protectionists.

“Removing the 9 storey high rise apartment building & allow mid-rise maisonettes is exactly the kind of development we are advocating for. Missing Middle Housing is a range of house-scale buildings with multiple units – compatible in scale and form with detached single family homes – located in walkable neighbourhoods. We support a higher density on these lands that fits the ‘missing middle’ housing form.

'YES', said Sir Raymond

"Knights of the Round Table could sell the land with a restrictive covenant or alternatively partner with a housing provider & structure a part cash/vendor take back mortgage that has interest accruing but not payable subject to 'more affordable' housing price point conditions."

'YES!', shouted the Knights of the Round Table unanimously.

"We need to pivot from our original plans. Much has changed! What the Town Crier is proposing is mutually agreeable to all the great people of our lands. It will be done. We will put the WIN back into Winona"

'HOORAY'!, shouted the people. "Let's put this to bed and get roofs over people's heads!"

*Okay, everybody quiet down now and get some sleep. Good night Mama. Good night John-Boy Good Night everybody*

And they all lived happily ever after.

(Hopefully) The End.