

A Presentation in Support of ITEM 12.1 Request to delay Submission of Growth Plan Conformity Official Plan Amendment, Suspension of TimeTable of Municipal Conformity of Growth Plan and Extension to the Deadline for Growth Plan Conformity

Mr Mayor and Honourable Councilors, my name is Mervyn Russell. I am a retired clergy person with over 50 years experience. I live in Oakville and am a member of the Halton Action for Climate Emergency Now [HACEN] I thank you for the opportunity to present to you,

I am writing in support of the Resolution moved by Councillor Clark

I understand this resolution to be for the Council to unite around in support of principles of planning that need to be followed in a time of climate emergency.

What are these principles? I believe there are four.

The first is the principle of **responsibility**-- responsibility as regards care for the environment, and for the health and safety of the residents of this Region in a time of climate change. Council has passed a Climate Emergency Resolution recognizing that carbon emissions are heating the atmosphere in a manner that is adversely changing the interactions of the global systems that support all life on this planet. Council also clearly recognizes the need to maintain the sustainability of both the variety and vitality of living creatures and preserving the essential quality of the planet's air, water and soil.

The care of the environment is not an important concern of this Provincial Government. From almost the first day when they dismissed the Environmental Commissioner to their recent disempowering of the Conservation Authorities, we have seen their dismissive attitudes and actions towards responsibility for the environment. In this instance, less density of housing means less agricultural land, which is often a carbon sink and, instead, more urban sprawl with more carbon car travel, which results in more car fumes, which results in more heating of the atmosphere, which results in more climate made disasters

The second principle I want to mention is **security**. The extension of the urban boundary into the area of so called 'White Land' will result in a significant loss of agricultural land. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture states Ontario loses 175 acres of farmland each day and has already lost 42 % of its farmland since 1945. Only 2.5 % of Canada's landmass is suitable for farming, and SW Ontario has some of the best of that land. This land produces a source of energy that is more important than oil or electricity - food. A country that cannot feed itself is not a fully sovereign country and a country that is not fully sovereign is not secure. The rate of urban expansion must be curtailed.

Provincial Governments have not had an appreciation for the importance of agriculture. They have considered agricultural land as vacant, undeveloped, The business of agriculture is undervalued and agriculture is seen as not quite part of the modern business world, even though I doubt if there is an industry that has improved its productivity in the last 50 years more than agriculture. It contributes 13.7 billion to the economy of Ontario, which is more than another other industry. What is more is that there are two very good reasons for not encroaching further on agricultural land. First, there is still land available from the Provincial 2012 designated land for urbanisation, and, second, with all the changes in social relations both as regards family life and working life, who can possibly say what the demand for urban development will be in 2051?

The third principle I want to recognize is **creativity**. Council seems to recognize that what has taken place as urban and industrial development, is boring, inconvenient, wasteful and unhealthy. It is open to developing new kinds of urban areas in which the majority of everyday needs of food, recreation, education, health, are within walking distance and within an environment with trees, grass, flowers, birds and small animals. Urban hubs where life is more stimulating and satisfying. Where people can meet and mix, have a sense of being part of a vital and varied community and so decrease isolation, separation, fear, prejudice and crime.

On the basis of the Provincial Government's commitment to low intensity building expansion, it would seem it is still supporting extensive areas of sprawling, monotonous dullness. Where homes are where you sleep, eat and watch Netflix when you are not commuting, working or shopping.

The last principle I want to mention is **democracy**. True, the public will not be asked to vote on the contents of the City's Official Plan in order to decide what should be done; however, voting is not all there is to democracy. Full democracy means encouraging and enabling the public to be aware of what can and should be done in society and to provide opportunities for discussion and evaluation of different opinions and then voting for representatives and parties that they think will make the best decisions. Public consultation is expressly mentioned in The Provincial Policy Statement as an essential part of the process of planning land use.

The Provincial Government usually acts in a very different manner. It seems to assume that having won an election they have the right and the power to impose whatever they want, without consulting or, often, even respecting, either those who may have valuable expertise and experience, or those who are going to be most impacted by their decisions. It is "Do it our way or we'll do it for you." 'Our way or the highway', or in this case: 'Our way and the highway'. This has been their modus operandus as regards, not only the environment, but health, education, transportation, local government. It is particularly wrong in the middle of a pandemic when public consultation is especially difficult. The present Provincial Government is highly authoritarian.

This resolution is an act of resistance. I am glad you are going to share it widely. The Provincial Government has pulled back when challenged by ample and determined opposition. If enough municipalities support this motion, the Provincial government may retreat. To further help this to happen I urge you to trust your constituents. Let each one of you send a communication to each household, explaining what you are doing and why. I believe the people of Halton respect **responsibility, security, community and democracy**.

You are not just resisting urban sprawl, or even disregard for the environment, important as they are. You are also resisting bad government.

Thank you Mr. Mayor

Respectfully

Mervyn Russell -[Rev. Dr.]