

Feb 15 Address to Council re: 6-10-14 Elmhurst Proposal

As Council is certainly aware, and as evidenced by our previous submissions, including the addendum of over 100 signatures from our Sept 21 report to Council, all part of the official record, the residents of Old Kilworth are not opposed to development. Let me reiterate – WE ARE NOT ANTI-DEVELOPMENT.

We are simply looking for assurances that any proposed development complements and maintains the 'uniqueness' of our neighbourhood and ensures the integrity of our predominantly shallow wells and septic systems. Additionally, due to our ongoing issues with the lack of proper drainage and storm water management mechanisms in place, we are seeking solutions to ensure the fee simple integrity of our properties.

The earlier submissions were preliminary in nature and were based on the original 6-10-14 Elmhurst proposal and the accompanying Geo Technical report. We respectfully request a future opportunity to submit a final report after having a chance to fully review the amended proposal submitted today by the developer.

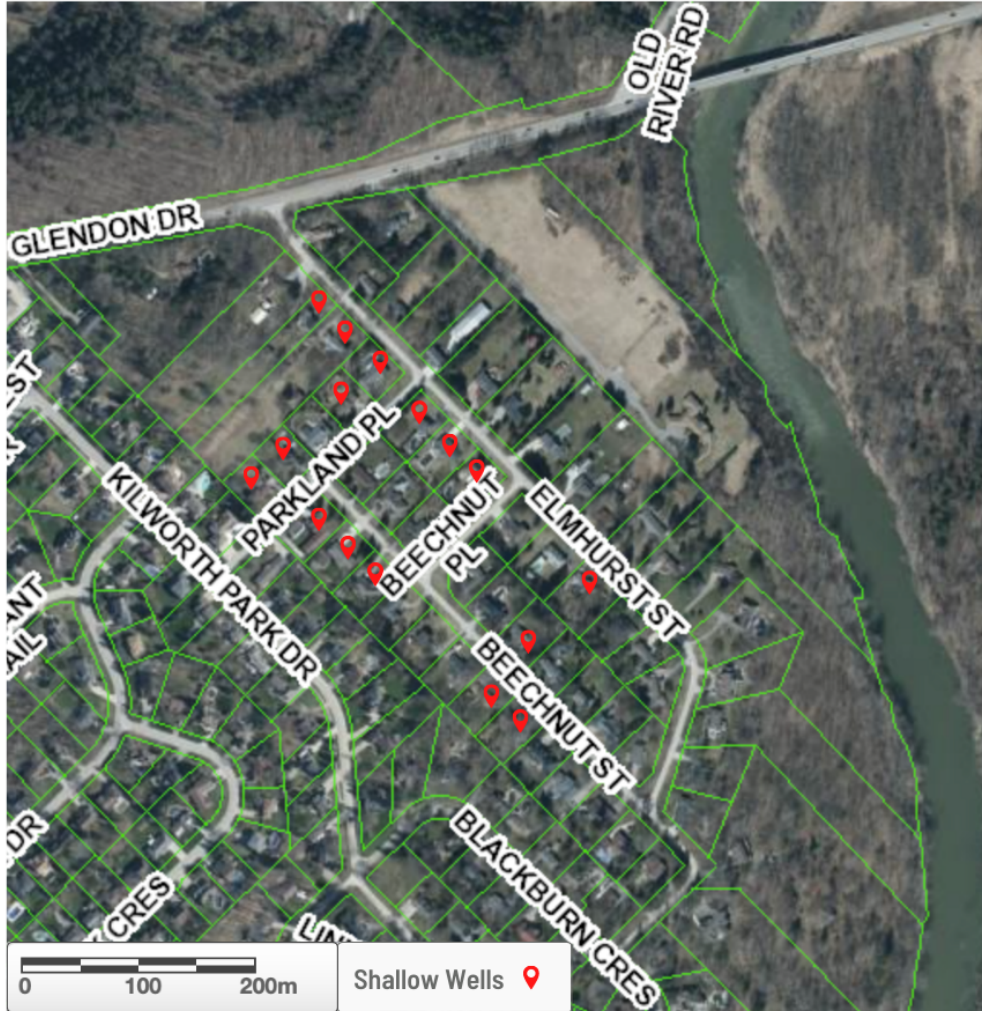
Before I proceed, please note that Old Kilworth consists of Elmhurst, Parkland and Beechnut streets and is bounded by the Thames River at the extreme southeast end of Middlesex Centre. Our neighbourhood enjoys a strong rural feel, more like a hamlet than its 'urban' designation. Might I add, we have been the often-neglected part of Kilworth... one small example is noted in the map used at the recent Transportation & Service public meeting showing us as having stormwater systems in place, which is erroneous. We are currently in communication with the County's drainage Superintendent in this regards as well as the principals involved in the formulation of that report.

Our concerns as they pertain to the integrity of our water wells are evidenced by the map below that partially shows that most wells in use in Old Kilworth are actually shallow wells, contrary to what was presented in the developer's Geotechnical report.....Bill 23 has created an urgency in our ongoing concerns and has the potential to exacerbate the situation and dilute our fee simple legislated rights.

If keeping to its rural roots is part of the stated vision of the Middlesex Centre plan, we respectfully point out that this proposal flies in the face of that vision, and I quote "A thriving, progressive and welcoming community that honours our rural roots and embraces our natural spaces". As you can see from the Google Earth map below, Old Kilworth does indeed have a rural feel to it, with lots at a minimum of a half-acre each, a few even surpassing 5 acres. The streets are narrow, not asphalted, unlit, with no sidewalks, no stormwater drainage, with wells and septic systems. A couple of stop signs & a bit of yellow road paint were added in 2021. This contrasts with the rest of Kilworth, which as per their designation, does have a much more urban feel, with smaller lots, lit streets, sidewalks, full municipal services, traffic control measures and wider paved streets.

This proposal of 45 condominium units on 3 lots clearly lies in direct contrast to the rest of the Old Kilworth neighbourhood of close to 60 single family homes clearly evident in a critical look at the map below.

Middlesex County Map - Shallow Well Locations



Moreover, we do not see how this proposal ‘meshes’ with Middlesex Centre’s mission statement: “To deliver the highest standard in municipal services in a sustainable, professional and innovative manner.”

Here are some relevant concerns and points for consideration:

- 1) The proposed development will, by definition, be isolated from the rest of the community with only one access point to enter AND exit, not onto Glendon drive, but

onto Elmhurst St, close to a steep incline at the juncture of Glendon and Elmhurst, where no left turn is, as of yet, permitted onto Elmhurst. Residents of this development will be obliged to drive everywhere – as it will be too congested to safely walk or bike onto Elmhurst. Nearby Parkland will also immediately become overly congested and unsafe with all kinds of traffic – service & construction, residential, school bus, pedestrian & even bicycle traffic.

The current traffic count for Glendon Drive shows over 14000 vehicles daily, projecting to over 24000 by 2035.

This proposal does not fit with any innovative models for housing where residents can readily walk to access recreation, school bus stops and other neighbourhood benefits.

- 2) With climate change in the forefront, the removal of vegetation and mature trees, the loss of wildlife habitat, the draining of the land, the mounds of concrete needed - this proposal will increase the stress on the land and water not just within the area of the development but to a much farther range, and shows no environmental care or innovation. It is a significant negative to sustainability.
- 3) Old Kilworth residents, and forgive me if it sounds repetitive, are immensely concerned with the potential and seemingly likely contamination of their water wells by the stormwater runoff by the inundation, and of runoff causing flooding issues. The increasingly frequent torrential downpours as we deal with Climate Change will exacerbate this problem.

From our understanding, should this proposal be accepted, our water safety is not assured whatsoever, and once the developers finish their work and leave, we will have no further recourse with respect to liability. It is without doubt that this development would lead to changing water tables thus negatively impacting water wells and septic systems.

Since the inception of this community in the early 1960's, residents have borne the responsibility of ensuring safe water systems. This development would seriously erode this ability, and also endanger our safe circulation in the neighbourhood.

What we see in the proposals by this developer thus far give us no confidence whatsoever that what will be built will not jeopardize the integrity of our well and septic systems for daily safe living, nor address the environmental concerns of Old Kilworth residents.

From our preliminary review of the newest proposal of 45 units, we have the following concerns and as expressed by residents. Please note the following:

- a) We are somewhat encouraged by the study that is being presently undertaken by Middlesex Centre on servicing and transportation, but we fear that any solutions will be far too late to deal with our present concerns and with ramifications from this development. From past presentations, the developer is aware of our concerns regarding drainage, stormwater, septic integrity and above all well water contamination,

and yet we see no substantive changes in this proposal to address these potential catastrophes.

- b) The sheer density of the proposal , at 45 units where presently just 3 residences occupy, and the fact that these are, for the most part, attached units with little space for runoff to allow proper drainage, along with the simple geography of the site at the top of the hill with the rest of the community downhill, and all of us on fully functioning wells with very diverse substrata below surface, are all a recipe for potential disaster
- c) Past responses by the developer's consultants to our concerns were " 'this meets provincial minimum standards'" and, when we inquired about potential well contamination "we'll deal with that when it happens" was the response. How can this give us any confidence in the integrity of this developer, especially with the introduction of Bill 23?
- d) We are fully aware that whatever is approved for this particular parcel of land (5 acres) will set a precedent for other lots at the top of Elmhurst Street which have been sold.
- e) Once the development is complete, and the negative consequences we suspect and fear, do come to fruition, it cannot be undone – the damage will be permanent.
- f) We understand the general mandate from the provincial government is to 'build homes', and I refer to Bill 23, with the overall goal of creating affordable housing. However, we strongly sense that this development will not fall into the category of Affordable Housing.

Further items of note:

Objective 2.1 of the Official Plan states "PRIORITY - BALANCED GROWTH" - there is nothing in the proposed development which suggests this to be a priority for the developer.

Objective 4.1 highlights "PRIORITY - SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES" – "Improve safety for road users" – This proposal will surely be a hazard to pedestrian and vehicular safety due to its density, site geography and location.

Referring again to the amended proposal and making Council aware of the information session held by the developer on September 7 2022, the following was tabled by residents. It appears our concerns were not taken seriously:

1. Lot 10 is in extreme proximity to the property at 20 Parkland Place;
2. Safety concerns: There is no proposed traffic loop in the community; vehicles will be reversing unsafely; very difficult for service & emergency vehicles to enter & exit safely;
3. It is densely populated without greenspace or recreation area;

4. It is in close proximity to the hill to the Kilworth bridge which does not infrequently see vehicular accidents (directly referenced in London Free Press issued Dec 14, 2015); this situation has certainly not improved since then;
5. The proposal has only one lane for entry – exit onto Elmhurst, which is a much narrower street than streets found in the newer sections of Kilworth (Beechnut & Parkland are similarly narrow);
6. Excavation will interfere with current shallow water wells downstream rendering primary sources derelict or altering water quality;
7. Drainage: draining the property will directly impact water wells and will cause groundwater surge, flooding septic systems as well as for properties downstream, downhill;
8. There are no municipal water drainage or stormwater systems in place in Old Kilworth
9. Mr. Knutson's response to many of the concerns raised was "this meets the provincial minimum standards";
10. The proposed layout of these condos and development isolates it from the rest of the neighbourhood;
11. The drainage or leachate from the development will impact wells and contaminate them – this concern was met with the response "we'll deal with that when it happens" (A. Gubbels).

As a group, we continue to research municipal, provincial and federal legislation, as well as other pertinent data and we will make reference to them in our final comprehensive report. We again request to have the opportunity to make a final submission after a full review of this amended proposal and consulting with appropriate stakeholders and advisors, including the residents of Old Kilworth.

Thank you for your consideration.