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Greenbelt discussed following NDACT Annual General Meeting

Written By Marni Walsh

More than forty were in attendance at the Annual General Meeting of the North Dufferin Agricultural and Community Taskforce on May 2nd. The meeting saw the Board return for another year and was followed by discussions on the proposed expansion plans for the Greenbelt Protection Area.

The returning Board includes NDACT Chair Alia Jalbert, NDACT Vice Chair and Chair of Food and Water First Brian Bell, and members Ted Metz, Ralph Armstrong, Tom Long, Karren Wallace, and Carl Cosack. Donna Baylis will continue in her role as Executive Director of Food and Water First.

The keynote speaker for the evening was Victor Doyle, the chief architect of farmland-protection in the Greenbelt Expansion Plan and a former Manager for the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) Planning Policy Branch.

Mr. Doyle rebuted developer's claims that the Greenbelt Plan will constrained the supply of land or the supply of ground related housing and hamper the Places to Grow Act. Mr Doyle stated that there is lots of land currently available for development to 2031 and beyond. He reported that demographics show that large numbers of existing homes will be coming onto the market as seniors and baby boomers age.

NDACT made delegations Municipal Councils and County Council recently, proposing that the initiative to study expanding the Greenbelt include a variety of source water and watershed areas. ?During those delegations, most municipalities expressed the concern that this expansion would adversely affect their official plans for development and/or would adversely affect their tax base,? said NDACT Chair Alia Jalbert Smyth.

Mr. Doyle met concerns regarding increased taxes in a Greenbelt area with the suggestion that townships partnering together to provide better resources for services.

Melancthon Mayor Darren White told the Free Press, ?A lot of great information regarding the Greenbelt proposal, was passed along? at the meeting. ?I continue to be struck by how much disinformation or misinformation is out there regarding it,? he said. ?I still think there are a lot of unanswered questions regarding the Greenbelt proposal and I hope there will be some clarity moving forward after the election.?

Vice Chair Brian Bell said the meeting was ?an opportunity to touch base with our local community and supporters particularly during this provincial election period.? He said, ?NDACT will continue to monitor the provincial election and will work with the newly elected government and representatives to further the protection of prime farmland and our source water regions.?

Mr. Bell directs voters to Food and Water First's website to see the ?Election Watch? page which lists the provincial candidates' positions on preserving farmland and source water regions as well as preserving the Greenbelt and the proposal to expand it.