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MPP Klees presents Preserving Existing Communities Act

Newmarket-Aurora MPP Frank Klees took the first step to preserve the quality of life of existing communities and to make municipal councils responsible and accountable for decisions relating to the intensification of established neighbourhoods.

?From time to time, legislation can have unintended consequences, and when those consequences become evident, we have a responsibility to amend that legislation to ensure the public interest is protected,? said Klees. ?The Places to Grow Act and its companion legislation, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe is a case in point.?

Klees made the comments after presenting his private member's bill in the legislature where it passed first reading and is scheduled for second reading debate on April 18.

?As currently written, the Places to Grow Act and the Growth Plan provide that a significant portion of new growth is to take place through intensification in existing built-up areas,? said Klees. ?The result is that the quality of life and the very character of existing communities can be negatively affected, not to mention the impact on property values and the strain on the infrastructure of the community.?

?That's why I am proposing to amend the Places to Grow Act through my private member's bill to provide that where an application is made that would increase the number of housing units in an existing community or extend that intensification to lands designated as Parks and Open Space, the decision made by a municipal council will be final and can not be appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board.?

Klees pointed out that the amendments he is proposing would not prevent an applicant from working with a municipal council to come to reasonable terms on a proposed development, but that it would be the local council that would have the final decision, not the Ontario Municipal Board.

?The amendment I'm proposing will not only empower municipal councils to make the final decision about what their community should be, but it also makes those councillors accountable to their electorate for their decisions,? said Klees. ?No more hiding behind the OMB or blaming provincial policy.

?The character of our communities should be decided by the people elected to make those decisions, not by an OMB panel,? concluded Klees.