

Conservationists want warehouse alternatives

ERIC MCGUINNESS

The Hamilton Spectator

DUNDAS (Jan 9, 2009)

The Hamilton Conservation Authority wants to try to broker a deal to find alternatives to a proposed warehouse at the Cootes Drive entrance to Dundas.

A motion to oppose rezoning the two-hectare site at King Street East and Olympic Drive was tabled last night after lawyer Brian Duxbury, representing landowner Doug Hammond, agreed to meet Joanna Chapman and other citizens opposed to the project.

Duxbury said he was asking the city's economic development and planning committee to defer action on the application until Feb. 17, after the authority's next board meeting.

Authority chair Chris Firth-Eagland said he would convene a meeting of the two sides to explore ideas. Puslinch Councillor Don McKay offered himself as a neutral party from outside Hamilton.

In her presentation to the authority board, Chapman suggested the former Hamilton-Wentworth Region sold the land to Hammond in 1999 without public notice, contrary to the Municipal Act.

She also said one benefit of Dundas amalgamating with Hamilton in 2001 is that the Valley Town no longer has to compete with the city for industrial assessment.

The authority's conservation areas advisory board voted unanimously last month to ask the authority board to oppose the project, even though authority staff did not object.

Board members Duke O'Sullivan and Jim Howlett argued last night the board is obliged to go beyond technical arguments and look at social and community impacts. O'Sullivan said the authority has to be concerned about the adjacent Veldhuis property it recently purchased on the edge of Desjardins Canal.

The Bay Area Restoration Council and the 700-member Hamilton Naturalists' Club are urging the city to reject rezoning.

BARC executive director Jim Hudson says putting four warehouse buildings on the property is an "insane" idea.

Naturalists' Club president Bill Lamond says the proposed use is incompatible with the adjacent Volunteer Marsh, canal and Cootes.

emcguinness@thespec.com

905-526-4650