



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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“Seaton Land Exchange is too great a price for the People of Pickering”

Pickering Ontario:

Late last week the Province of Ontario signed off quietly on one of the most controversial land exchanges. “No details have been provided regarding the land swap specifically, as to what it will cost the tax payers of Pickering in the long term and what guarantees there are to ensure that lands will be developed to meet the objectives of Sustainable Pickering” said Ward One City Councillor Jennifer O’Connell.

The land exchange was part of attempts by the former Conservative Government to save the Oak Ridges Moraine. Since that time not only has there been development on the Moraine but the Seaton lands that were exchanged are equally sensitive and home to the last cold water streams in the GTA which plays an integral part of a complex system of streams and aquifers that end up in Lake Ontario and Frenchman’s Bay.

According to O’Connell, she was notified after a courtesy call was made to the Mayor of Pickering who then sent an e-mail to members of Council.

“I was shocked that there was no debrief, no reports no disclosure what so ever.”

While some view Seaton as the future solution to Pickering’s economic situation, this according to O’Connell is not the case. “Not only will Seaton not reduce the present level of taxation being faced by our residents which last year hit 8.79%, in the long run it could in fact send it even higher”

According to Provincial Regulations under the Development Charges Act, development charges from Seaton cannot be used to offset existing pressures on infrastructure, they can only be used to build new infrastructure to accommodate the potential 70,000 new residents who will add to an already congested road system and even that is not at full cost. The existing tax payers will be paying the price for at least 40% of all infrastructure not to mention the increased costs to operate new infrastructure such as fire, police ambulance, recreation only to mention a few.

With a Provincial election only weeks away, Councillor O’Connell will be asking Pickering to host an open forum and invite the respective leaders to meet with residents and local leaders to discuss with those most impacted by this deal what will be done to ensure that Seaton does not destroy the sustainability of Pickering economically, socially, and environmentally.

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