

Advocacy group opposes high-density development behind Orangeville Mall

By Jasen Obermeyer

A group, incorporated as the Hansen High Density Awareness Group (HHDAG), is opposing a proposed 623-unit residential subdivision behind the Orangeville Mall.

This high-density housing development, has been the subject of talks for several years now. Orangeville Highlands Limited and Bruce Dale Investments Inc. are behind the proposed development, and are requesting an amendment to the town's official plan zoning by-law, to build the high-density housing in an area that now has ordinary residential lots.

'Local politicians abdicated their responsibility to Orangeville taxpayers, residents, and voters,' says Dorothy Pedersen, spokesperson for HHDAG.

The rezoning, if approved, would change the current designation of the land from 'Open Space,' 'Medium Density Residential,' and 'Open Space Recreation' to a designation of 'site specific, to be determined.'

HHDAG, which started out with about 15 members and is looking to recruit more, held a meeting at 59 First Street last Friday evening (June 22).

At the meeting, members identified several concerns for the high density development, including; the town's off-leash dog park being removed, a potential decline in the water table, increased noise and traffic, less privacy, infrastructure issues, and negative influence on wildlife.

'I think all kinds of nefarious activities will go on here,' says Ms. Pedersen.

Several members discussed how they came to Orangeville to get away from high-density housing. 'There's a bigger thing happening here,' noted one of the members.

'The municipality claims it's helpless because a high-density quota was dictated to Orangeville by the Government of Ontario, but they rolled over and accepted it,' explained Ms. Pedersen. 'They never questioned it, fought it, or defended the right of Orangevillians to decide the population density of their own community. It's time for our politicians to do that now.'

Another area of concern was with the population increasing, there might be a need for more policing and staff at Headwaters hospital.

Ms. Pedersen indicated they will be contacting Orangeville council before the upcoming municipal election. The group's next meeting will be at the Meridian Credit Union office on Broadway on July 6, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.