

WHY WAS THE EP BOUNDARY SO AGGRESSIVELY EXPANDED IN 2016 ?



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Recall the observations Councillor Neal made during the October 3, 2016 meeting. He said: “If you look on the map there is a significant shift in the EP boundaries going on and it

only seems to be happening in Clarington, not sure why that is.”

I am not convinced this next municipal archive find will add any substance to the EP discussion. However it does bring into question just exactly who gave the orders to Clarington Staff to expand the EP designated areas in Clarington as aggressively as they did ?

Was it the Province? Was it the Conservation Authority? Was it a misinterpretation of the Provincial Policies by Clarington Staff? Was a few aggressive Clarington Staff members?

I am not convinced this next municipal archive find (below) will add any substance to the EP discussion. But with everyone pointing fingers as to who is responsible for the expansion of the EP designated lands, I found this report interesting to say the least.

The report is Number PDS-059-16 dated October 24, 2016 and was found during a search of the Clarington archives of meeting agendas, minutes and reports.

The report was prepared by Clarington Staff for review and approval by Members of Clarington Council. The report formed our “Municipal Comments on the Co-ordinated Review of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Greenbelt Plan, and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.”

The report is Clarington’s official comments and recommendations to the Province and contains comments on the Natural Heritage System which includes protection for Environmental Protection (EP) lands.

The archived records show this report (Clarington Planning Services Report PSD-050-16) was reviewed and approved by Clarington Committee on October 24, 2016 – 3 week after the failed Neal/Hooper motion, and seven days prior to Clarington Council approving the Official Plan.

By a directive of Council, the report was forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and

Housing, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, and the Region of Durham. These comments were drafted by Clarington Staff and approved by Clarington Council.

Note: Provincial policies refer to EP lands as natural heritage features. The reference below to Natural Heritage System includes natural features such as woodlands, wetlands, watercourses and valley lands all of which are included within our Clarington’s definition of EP designated lands.

Here is an excerpt from page 8 of the Report PSD-059-16, again the report is dated October 24, 2016:

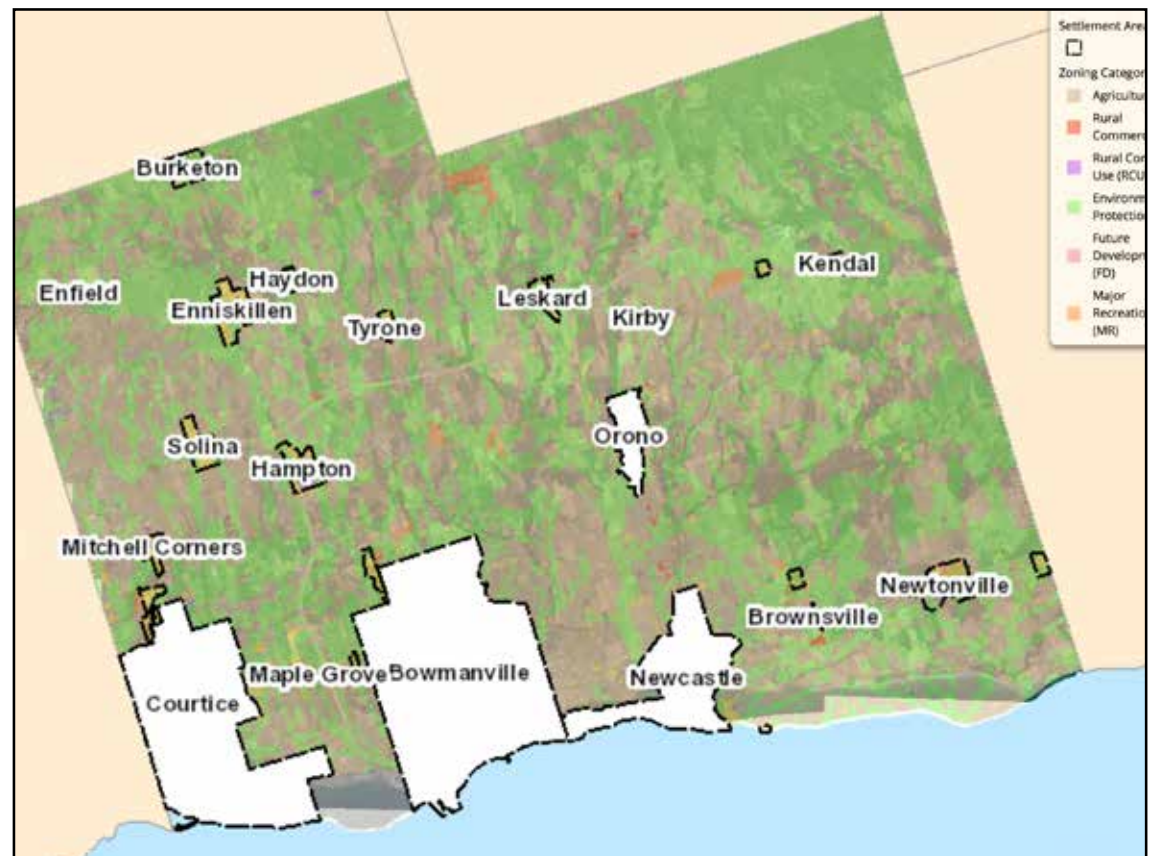
3.7 The Natural Heritage System

Policies have been included in the Growth Plan which would require municipalities to incorporate in their Official Plans a natural heritage system that has been identified and mapped by the Province using a Provincial Methodology. This Methodology is not projected to be available until 2018 at the earliest and would only apply to a small amount of land. The Municipality supports the efforts by the province to protect the natural heritage system through the development

of a consistent methodological approach however, requests that the methodology be used as a minimum protection for the features. Municipalities and Conservation Authorities should have the ability to further refine and define the areas that need protection. Further, with the Province taking a greater role in defining natural heritage features and, in particular, wetlands and ANSI’s, the Municipality should be shielded from the time and expense of defending appeals on these designations.

Recommendation:

That the Province’s policy for the preparation of a natural heritage system protection methodology and mapping be supported as a minimum, however request that there is still flexibility for municipalities and Conservation Authorities to further refine and protect the natural heritage features. It is also requested that appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board not be permitted for areas that are delineated by the Province.



Proposed draft rezoning map.