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NEW REPORT ILLUSTRATES SHORTCOMINGS IN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDY

Local Residents Ask Council For New Study And Consultation Process

Collingwood, ON Tuesday November 27, 2018 – In an open letter to incoming Collingwood Town Councillors, local environmental group SOS Collingwood issued a request today that the incoming Town Council require a new Environmental Impact Study (“EIS”) for the controversy laden Living Waters/Bear Estate development project. In support of its request, SOS Collingwood delivered a recently completed peer review of the developer funded EIS Update submitted in support of the project back in November 2017. The peer review report was prepared by Barrie-based Birks Natural Heritage Consultants Inc.. SOS Collingwood has been raising concerns about the proposed development since local residents became aware in June 2018 that an unannounced plan to more than double the intensity of use on the sensitive waterfront site was quietly working its way through the old Town Council.

In its open letter to Council, SOS Collingwood emphasized that the new Birks peer review concluded that the developer’s EIS Update only provided a **“very high-level”** site characterization of the proposed development and that its assessment of impact to adjacent natural heritage features was **“generally lacking”**. As SOS Collingwood Director and spokesperson Jeff Newton noted, “The Birks’ report confirms what SOS Collingwood has been saying for some time, the developer’s EIS Update has significant gaps”. The peer review identified no fewer than nine deficiencies that would need to be addressed to complete a thorough ecological impact assessment. “As there are so many deficiencies and the adjacent lands are so environmentally sensitive, SOS Collingwood believes the best course of action is to prepare a completely new study”, added Newton.

SOS Collingwood also stressed that its concerns with the project were not limited to its environmental impact assessment. They noted that the development proposal also fails to comply in many areas with the Town’s Official Plan, Zoning Bylaw and Waterfront Master Plan. And, with improved transparency and accountability being key issues in the recent municipal election campaign, SOS Collingwood believes its time local residents were provided with a meaningful and open consultation process on major projects of this nature.

“We’ve said it many times before, SOS Collingwood is not opposed to development”, stated Newton. “But we strongly believe that all development must conform to the Official Plan and the Zoning Bylaw, that special care must be applied to development near our sensitive wetland areas, and that local residents must be provided a voice in the process”. “Our letter to the incoming Council offers to work collaboratively on the creation of that open consultation process. We hope they take us up on that offer”, added Newton.



LINKS YOU MIGHT FIND USEFUL

SOS Collingwood Website: www.soscollingwood.ca

Change.org Petition: <https://chn.ge/2NyMoZC>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SOSCollingwood>

Instagram: sos_collingwood

Enclosures: SOS Collingwood open letter to Town Council
Birks Natural Heritage Consultants Peer Review Report.