



Small is Beautiful.

The View from Belfountain

Summer 2014



Lobsters Take Action on the ORB Development

Lobsters are coming to Belfountain to help us with ORB.

The BCO Board learned on June 12th that ORB began the process of applying to the Town of Caledon to build 66 houses on the property south of Belfountain.

When Belfountain community objected to the development 25 years ago, the community had to raise almost \$150,000 to go to the OMB hearing. Even though the developer's application process can take several months, we are preparing NOW for the inevitable costs of taking action (legal fees, etc.) There's no time to lose.

*That's why lobsters are
coming to Belfountain!*

On Monday, June 23, the BCO's First Annual LobsterFest fundraiser will be held at the Belfountain Inn. Come out and join us for this fun and unusual event—you'll enjoy a wonderful dinner while you help support the initiative of preventing the development. Tickets are limited so book yours now.

For tickets, contact Mary Lawrence today at 519-927-9191 or lobsterfest@belfountain.ca

The View articles are written by community contributors. The BCO welcomes contributions but does not necessarily agree or endorse all the opinions expressed.

ORB – The Tip of the Iceberg That Threatens Belfountain

Since the AGM in February, the directors of the BCO have been working hard to investigate issues that impact the hamlet and environs of Belfountain now and for the future.

Proposed ORB Development

Three directors are heading up the water investigation as it pertains to the proposed ORB development.

Over the last four months, these three have combed through reams of data from previous years and are in the process of meeting and/or setting up meetings with the Region of Peel, the Town of Caledon, Credit Valley Conservation (CVC), and the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC), requesting information about water issues in our area. In addition, they have submitted requests for the results of the test drilling that you have probably noticed is being conducted on the ORB property.

The developer has begun the application process to build on the property as of June 12, 2014.

Roads

The Board has contacted the roads planning committee about the proposed changes for Bush Street, Mississauga Road, Winston Churchill, and Old Baseline. The majority of Belfountain residents have made it clear that they don't want sidewalks in the hamlet, road widening, and the excess light from additional streetlights.

There is a design for sidewalks and parking, and the potential for land appropriation, which will not enhance the historic nature of the hamlet. Our thoughts are known and we are awaiting a response.

It seems ironic that the roads plan could ruin the very charm that draws so many visitors.

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More Tourists? No, Thanks

The 2015 Pan/Parapan Am Games at the Caledon Equestrian Park are a priority of the Town of Caledon. Some Belfountain residents are concerned about the impact more tourism will have on the hamlet.

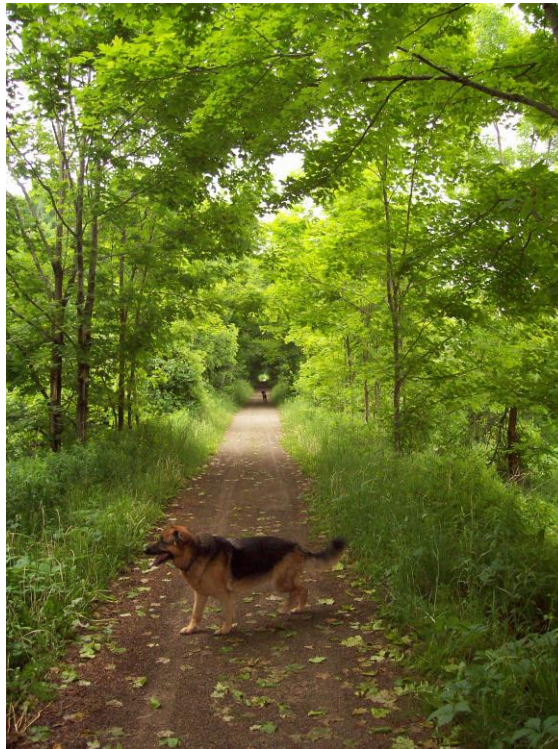
On April 30, at a Roundtable on Tourism in Caledon, consultants hired by the Town from Sierra Planning and Management were visibly taken aback to learn that Belfountain, Inglewood, and Alton were not interested in increasing tourism.

Why not?

"We already can't get through the village in the summer," a BCO director explained to them. "This is where we live." She courteously refrained from pointing out to them that Belfountain is our home, not a theme park for day visitors. "Tourism in the area should leave no footprint." Hiking, cycling, horseback riding, and other low-impact activities are most appropriate for Belfountain.

Like Belfountain, Alton and Inglewood share serious water concerns. Although Alton has more visitor-friendly amenities in the form of restaurants and art galleries, heavy tourist traffic is simply not feasible.

Meanwhile, BCO directors have learned that ORB, increased tourism, and the roads issue are not the only threats to our community. In fact, ORB is only the tip of the iceberg that menaces Belfountain.



Caledon—the Greenest?

In 2003, the Town of Caledon was the co-recipient of the "Greenest Town in Ontario" award. While the BCO commends the Town for its ecological initiatives, members of the Board are concerned about the Town's statement on its website that, "Over the past year, Caledon has been reviewing its Official Plan for conformity with a range of provincial policy directives..." including the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

While the province's Growth Plan claims that one of its guiding principles is to:

"Protect, conserve, enhance and wisely use the valuable natural resources of land, air and water for current and future generations," it also plans settlement area (i.e. housing) of 60,000 hectares in the Region of Peel.

At the Environmental Strategic Plan Roundtable Session on February 25, various individuals representing The Town of Caledon, Eco-Caledon, Peel Region Public Health, Peel Integrated Planning Division, Albion Hills Community Farm and Enbridge Energy, spoke on topics ranging from reducing our carbon footprint, monitoring of emissions, "Smart" commuting, spreading the sustainable challenge message, incentives for green retrofitting, and eating locally, to name a few. Discussions included: more electric car charging stations, increased preferential car-pooling parking, communal gardens, promoting Caledon's green model to other communities, etcetera.

At the conclusion of the session, one of our attending directors stated that all this discussion was laudable but was ultimately irrelevant if we do not address the "elephant in the room," that being the insidious impacts of urban sprawl. She was enthusiastically applauded by the other attendees for her comments.

NEC, Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine up for review

In 2015, the province will begin a review of The Greenbelt plan, the Niagara Escarpment plan, and the Oak Ridges Moraine plan. BCO Directors attended a Roundtable discussion about the proposed review on May 13, 2014.

Despite the innocuousness of this early stage of the process, other public meetings indicate that Caledon is slated for massive "growth." This, of course, means population growth – or sprawl – turning the countryside into a gigantic suburb.

A woman stood up to speak in the Caledon East Town Hall at the February 20 meeting.

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"I would like to see no growth in Caledon," she said. "How do we create a community with no growth?"

Chairing the consultation between the community and Council on Future Growth for the Town of Caledon, Mayor Marolyn Morrison replied: "It's not one of the options."

And there lay the crux of the matter for any Belfountain resident who opposes the proposed ORB development that aims to build 66 new houses on 177 acres on the south edge of Belfountain.

No growth, say your elected reps from here to Queen's Park, is not an option.

Caledon is currently near 70,000 people. The province and the Ontario Municipal Board have already ruled that the population will total 108,000 by 2031.

The Mayor's 'options' that night were five population projections for the decade beyond 2031. By the year 2041, Caledon's population will hit between 132,000 and 167,000, depending which of the five options is adopted. That growth is inevitable, the meeting heard—the province has set out a growth plan right up to 2046.

By the year 2041, the planners said, Bolton and the new town of Mayfield West (Hurontario and Mayfield Road) will be of equal size—between 47,700 and 55,700 depending on which option is adopted.

Some 50 construction union members in matching shirts clapped and cheered as their representative stood to say: "We support the growth strategy."

A series of speakers carrying briefcases addressed Council, strongly supporting growth.

Local photographer Pete Patterson waited his turn at the mike: "I've heard we can't stop growth unless we get maybe a plague," he said. "Mayfield West is an abomination. It's just urban sprawl yet again, yet again, yet again."

A man from north end of Shaw's Creek stood: "Let the growth go to Windsor. They're crying out for growth," he said. "The province says jump and we say how high. I don't think that's right."

"Growth does not have to be evil," said Glenn Schnarr, planner for the planned Alloo Village development, covering 2,000 acres of mainly prime farmland north of Mayfield Road. "The province has mandated that Caledon grow."

If you like living here, it is absolutely vital to contact your government representatives at all levels and tell them that we want the Greenbelt,

the Niagara Escarpment and the Oak Ridges Moraine to be EXPANDED, not reduced. There must also be controls on aggregates, which currently appear to be exempt from any kind of protective legislation.

What's at stake?

Our natural and historic heritage, animal habitats, the rural character of our communities, the availability and quality of our water, and the simple, quiet beauty of the countryside that attracts thousands of visitors every year.

Even worse (if that's possible), the province seems determined to pave over and build on some of the best farmland in Canada. ORB and Alloo are two examples of this scheme. Despite our giant land mass, only 4.7 percent of our nation is arable land, according to the World Bank (2011). Contrast that with India's 52.9 percent or France's 33.5 percent. The US has almost four times as much arable land as we do, at 17.5 percent.

According to the Provincial Plan: "More than one in every three new immigrants settles in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. In 2011, the region was home to approximately 9 million people and 4.5 million jobs. By 2041, that is forecast to increase to 13.5 million people and 6.3 million jobs – an increase of 50 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively."

Does it occur to our provincial planners that all these new immigrants will have to eat, as will everyone who already lives here?

Take out food

The gigantic development of hundreds of acres in the Alloo area (Mayfield and Creditview) will cover up some of the best farmland in Ontario. With the usual developer's ironic facility for naming a property after what is lost, the new "village" is to be called "Alloo Greens."

It has clearly escaped the province's notice that we can't grow food on the Canadian Shield. Yet they are planning a new 400-series highway to run right across Caledon's valuable farmland, watershed, and natural habitats, from the 400 to Guelph, along Old School Road. Apparently, it's more important to drive than to eat. That's a new one in the history of the human race.

Despite all the wonders our provincial electoral candidates claimed they would perform for us, not a single one of them has addressed the issue of food security and the loss of prime Ontario farmland and natural areas. Europe,

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perhaps because of the salient lessons of two World Wars, is light-years ahead of us in this regard. It's embarrassing to think that all we have to offer future generations is an almost criminal short-sightedness.

The multi-millions that go into building one 400-series highway would be much better spent funding farmers, so they can afford to do their job.

Belfountain and the Dalai Lama

However, there's more to life than food. No less a person than the Dalai Lama has pointed out that one of the big problems with overcrowding and overpopulation is that people have no quiet places left to go and commune with nature or simply be.

Old School Road is several blocks south of Belfountain, but the pollution from highway noise, light, and surrounding development will impact us even here, along with increased ease of access to the sensitive natural environment, bringing permanent changes to the neighbourhood.

The beauty of the Belfountain area is that it's exactly the kind of quiet place the Dalai Lama—among others—believes is vital to a healthy life. And, with a little effort, it can stay that way.

What You Can Do

Contact your MPP, local councillors, and Regional government representatives.

Let them know you value the countryside and want an expansion of the Greenbelt, the Niagara Escarpment and the Oak Ridges Moraine. This will help to protect the Belfountain area from encroachment. Tell them your concerns about farmland and natural areas. After all, humans can survive without cities and suburbs—we've done it before – but not without the countryside.

Small is beautiful.

Monarchs and Milkweed

If one species disappears the entire ecosystem suffers. Monarch butterflies are considered to be an endangered species in Ontario; meaning that the Monarch butterfly is very close to becoming extirpated. You, along with the other members of Belfountain, Ontario and even Canada can make a difference.

Monarch butterflies lay their eggs on milkweed plants. Monarch caterpillars then feed on these plants until they are big enough to form a chrysalis. Pesticides and development are killing out the fields that used to be filled with milkweed.

Without milkweed plants, Monarch caterpillars are not able to feed and the butterflies have nowhere to lay their eggs; this is why the once common orange, black and white winged butterfly is now an endangered species. Without the monarch, many plants won't be pollinated; therefore, they won't grow fruit or reproduce, leaving many animals hungry if those plants are a main source of food for them.

Don't lose hope, you can still make a difference to our world! You can buy Milkweed plants from Belfountain Public School and then plant them in your yard, or garden. This small step can help save our environment!

by Edi Cadham

Have News For The View?

If you would like to write an article or have news of the comings and goings of Belfountain and area residents, we invite you to contact us at: theview@belfountain.ca



The Salamander Festival is Coming!



The 18th Annual Salamander Festival is slated for September 27th, 2014, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the village of Belfountain and in the Belfountain Conservation Area.

Planning is underway to make this year's Salamander a day to remember! The Festival is named for the Jefferson Salamander and provides a day of family fun, while raising awareness for this tiny but vital endangered species.

The recently-elected Belfountain Community Organization partners with the Credit Valley Conservation to host the event. Funds raised will be used for environmental projects which focus on the BCO's theme "Small is Beautiful."

Help make this year's Salamander Festival a huge success by joining the organizing committee for Salamander Festival 2014. Contact Grecia Mayers, Salamander Chair at 519-927-3204.



Belfountain Seeks Heritage Designation

There it is—the pretty sign welcoming you as you drive in to Belfountain: “a heritage hamlet” established in 1825.

Actually, outside of two homes designated as heritage properties, we ain’t officially heritage anything. Not yet, that is.

The Board of the BCO is looking into having Belfountain designated a heritage hamlet to help protect the historic and rural qualities of the village and natural environs.

Although some may worry that the heritage designation would cause endless hassles for building and renovation projects on existing structures, there is nothing to fear because these matters are already regulated by the Niagara Escarpment Commission and have been for years. The Board has been told that the standards currently in place would continue, so there will be no additional burden of red tape.

Belfountain has long been viewed by the Town of Caledon as a “candidate” for heritage designation, said Caledon Heritage Officer Sally Drummond. “But over a much broader area than just the village itself.”

Don’t think of it as old buildings. Think, rather, of a district where historically meaningful events took place. Think the massive stone kiln below the escarpment, the quarries where a thousand men laboured 120 years ago, the Credit River that served the fur trade, the remarkable Belfountain Park.

Think not of a heritage hamlet, but of an officially recognized Cultural Heritage Landscape stretching from Shaw’s Creek Road, through the hamlet, down the Forks of Credit gorge and clear up to Brimstone and Cataract.

The investigative process, said Ms. Drummond, could cost the Town of Caledon up to

\$180,000. It’s a two-stage process that involves a Study and a Plan. Each phase takes eight to twelve months. Currently, Caledon is undertaking an assessment for a Heritage Conservation District in Bolton.

“Changes in zoning bylaws could happen,” said Drummond. But, she warned, heritage designation “is only successful if there is local support.”

Meanwhile, historic Pinckney House on Shaw’s Creek Road north of Belfountain, sits safe and dry under its new roof, awaiting its fate at the hands of owner Lafarge Canada aggregate. The View’s request for Lafarge official Chris McGuckin to indicate the company’s plans for the house remains unacknowledged while they are busy announcing their proposed merger with Swiss-based Holcim.

The historic designation for Belfountain should have been achieved years ago and it’s a mystery why no action was taken. It is possible that being a heritage hamlet would have helped us with the current road issues, although infrastructure needs can take precedence over preservation.

According to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport there are currently 110 Cultural Heritage Districts in Ontario. Belfountain and environs look forward to taking our rightful place in this select group.

Belfountain is a piece of heaven within Caledon, and should be preserved in its present state for present and future generations to enjoy. It has a unique quality within the Town of Caledon that needs to be protected.

The View from Belfountain...

is now available online at:
<http://Belfountain.ca>



To receive your e-issue, please send us an email, with your full name and street address included, to:
TheView@Belfountain.ca