

## **Master Plan for the Cheltenham Badlands Property, Caledon Ontario**

### **Public Meeting #1**

**Date and Time: Tuesday, October 13, 2015 @ 7:00PM**

**Location: Caledon Community Complex, Banquet Room A**

#### **Attendees:**

- Approximately 30 members of the community
- Representatives from the following agencies: Ontario Heritage Trust (owner); Region of Peel; Town of Caledon; Bruce Trail Conservancy; Bruce Trail Caledon Club; CVC; OPP
- Representatives from Dillon Consulting Limited (project consultants)

### **PURPOSE OF THE MEETING**

Public Meeting #1 is the first in a series of public consultation events on the Master Plan for the Cheltenham Badlands Property. The purpose of Public Meeting #1 was to:

- Introduce Dillon Consulting and its consulting team, the Ontario Heritage Trust team and the Cheltenham Badlands Management Planning Team (CBMPT);
- Outline Master Plan purpose, process and timelines;
- Provide information on recent management actions at the site;
- Describe Public Feedback Survey and emerging mid-survey trends;
- Obtain Public input on management issues and potential opportunities for improvement/enhancement of the Cheltenham Badlands site.

### **MEETING AGENDA**

1. Sign-in – 10 min.
2. Presentation (OHT/Dillon) – 30 min.
3. Questions and Answers (Dillon/OHT) – 15 min.
4. Break-out Discussion Groups (Self-directed) – 40 min.
5. Reporting Back – 20 min.
6. Closing Remarks – 5 min.

### **SUMMARY OF MEETING**

- 1. Meeting commenced at 7:10PM**
- 2. Presentation by the Ontario Heritage Trust and Dillon Consulting**

Karla Kolli from Dillon Consulting facilitated the evening and outlined the purpose of the meeting and the meeting format. Sean Fraser from the Ontario Heritage Trust and Caroline Marshall from Dillon Consulting presented to the group. The presentation addressed:

- contextual and site information about the Cheltenham Badlands property;
- the role of the Cheltenham Badlands Management Planning Team (CBMPT);
- Guiding Principles;
- management issues and recent actions undertaken to address safety concerns at the site;
- the Master Plan study process and schedule;
- trends and interim results of the online Public Feedback Survey (launched in September, closing October 31, 2015).

### 3. Questions and Answers

After the presentation the floor was opened up to questions from the group:

- It was asked if the prior studies to date (environmental) were to be discarded with the generation of this Master Plan.
  - The Master Plan will take previously completed technical studies and reports and incorporate and build on the information.
- A comment was made about the value of the work done to date and whether public opinion obtained through the Public Feedback Survey would be weighted. They would like to see the survey results weighted to favour the protection of the environment/geological/biological integrity of the site.
- It was mentioned that local community representation should be included as part of the management planning team. It was also noted that the Caledon Countryside Alliance and the Caledon Environmental Advisory Committee are not operational therefore there is currently no community representation on the CBMPT.
  - Corporate membership organizations such as ratepayers and BIAs are welcome and encouraged to participate as part of the process.
  - Sean Fraser of OHT will coordinate with the Town of Caledon to update and coordinate working with active community organizations for this study.
- Questions were asked about how sensitive the badlands feature is geologically, how it was created and why there was such dramatic erosion.
  - The formation of the badlands as a result of de-vegetation, erosion of topsoil and exposure of the underlying shale formation was described. Usually Badlands environments exist in drier (semi-arid) climates with few but intense precipitation events. It is believed that de-vegetation (as a result of over-grazing) and a thinner overburden on the site, combined with the forces of nature resulted in the badlands feature.
  - It was noted that the Team has been working with a geologist from the University of Toronto who has been studying the site. The analysis indicates that human foot traffic is having a significant and measurable impact to erosion at the site. Researchers estimate that human foot traffic may account for 10% of additional erosion. There has been an approximate 3 metre decrease in the

overall height of the badlands topography since the 1970's, with 1-3cm per year in recent years. The fencing along Olde Base Line Road will limit access and help protect the badlands feature.

- Participants mentioned that while cars are still stopping and they have witnessed some people leaning on the fence, it appears to be effectively keeping people off of the site. They would like the fence to be permanent.
- It was noted that during the past Thanksgiving weekend there were still hundreds of cars and people along Old Base Line Road trying to view the Badlands. The proposed parking lot may not be enough to hold the volume.
- The classification of the site within the Niagara Parks and Open Space System as an Escarpment Access site rather than a Nature Reserve site was questioned. It was noted that the Niagara Escarpment Commission initially identified this site as a Nature Reserve. The commenter would like to see the site reserved for educational purposes rather than for public access.
- A question was posed about impacts to the surrounding community (e.g. traffic and road safety) as a result of visitation to the site and if the Management Plan was going to study the impacts.
  - It was clarified that a study of impacts to the community are not currently part of the mandate for the Master Plan.
  - A councilor for Caledon indicated that there has been some discussion of traffic management in West Caledon however no formal study has been launched.
- A participant suggested that there was a conflict within the Guiding Principles, particularly between the Heritage and the Accessibility principles.
  - It was clarified that Accessibility has several meanings and in this case accessibility could mean intellectual accessibility of the site or controlled access of the site as well as inclusion of those with disabilities. It is not intended that the Heritage conservation principle be affected by the accessibility principle.
- One participant was interested to know what consultation standards are being followed and what the client is doing to make sure that the consultation process is effective.
  - It was noted that the facilitator is a member of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) and that the Master Plan consultation process has been structured in accordance with best practices. The consultant team will discuss the question further with the OHT.
- A comment was made that the traffic analysis undertaken for the Cheltenham Badlands Parking Study was undertaken in March which is not peak time for visitation to the Badlands. If there is going to be a further traffic study it should be taking place during September and October weekends.
- It was mentioned that because Olde Base Line Road is a main road into the area, and the route for EMS vehicles, upwards of 80% of the local community is affected by traffic volume generated by the site. There are competing interests with those that own

businesses in the area and are dependent on visitation. Visitors will come to the site regardless as it is a landmark provincially as well as locally. It may be worthwhile to place a larger parking lot (e.g. 200 spaces) offsite as well as the proposed parking lot (accessible).

- One participant wanted it known that having too many visitors can be seen as a positive thing for Caledon. They mentioned that safety is an important issue to focus on and that the management plan should aim to keep visitors off of the road for their protection.
- A question was asked about the closure notification (fencing) and if it went out to the public and whether there was a strategy for ongoing communication of the message.
  - The OHT clarified that yes a media release was sent out and there is notification on the OHT web-site. If periodic, strategic announcements need to be made in order to make sure the public is aware then that can be done.
- It was noted that for the study process that pausing the Master Plan in order to wait for the outcome of the NEC hearing might be counter intuitive since the outcome of the Master Plan should influence the parking lot decision.
- A question was raised about the need for a vision and if it was known what the capacity for visitors is on the site. It was also noted that the survey (Public Feedback) did not ask about community impacts.
  - The team noted that outside of traffic impacts to the local community it is part of the scope to identify the carrying capacity for the site itself, for example the Badlands feature and the trails within the site.
- A question was asked about the OHT's lands across the road and if it was part of the Master Plan boundary.
  - It was clarified that the study boundary is confined to the Cheltenham Badlands property boundary and lands outside of it are not part of the scope.
- It was noted that the traffic flow of the area and the modes are changing. There are a variety of road users including motorists, walkers, cyclists, bikers etc. Having pedestrians and a large volume of people on and crossing the road is dangerous.
- One participant suggested that the badlands were not formed as a result of poor farming practices, as is commonly described, and provided written comments to the consultants at the conclusion of the meeting.

#### **4. Break-out Discussion Groups**

After the Question and Answer period, the groups were encouraged to meet at their tables and respond to several questions both individually and as a group. Refer to attached Workbook for questions and results. The table groups were also encouraged through the use of sticky notes, coloured dots and markers to identify issue and opportunity areas for the site. Participants were then asked to report back to the group.

## 5. Reporting Back

Groups were asked to identify their top ideas from each table identified as follows:

### Table 1

- Property to the east of the site is for sale - the purchase of this land would yield more vacant property to use for the Master Plan.

### Table 2

- Need for the fence of the badlands to stay.
- If amenities are built they should be built outside of the fence line.
- There should be a parking/admission fee.

### Table 3

- Fence line should close off more of the site.
- If washrooms are introduced they should be located at the parking lot.
- The portion of the badlands that is south of the main portion could be open for public interaction.

### Table 4

- Observation decks for viewing would be favourable.
- Maintenance of the natural environment should be paramount.
- There could be the addition of: an observation deck, a controlled visitation area, a continuous fence line and a traffic management plan (including shuttle bus to and from site.)

### Table 5

- Explore the idea of closing the road down from dawn until dusk.
- There should be a fine for parking violations (\$400 suggested).
- Parking should be off-site. There should be a parking fee (\$20 per vehicle suggested) with the option of a shuttle bus to bring people to and from the site. The revenue generated could fund the Bruce Trail Conservancy or other local charities.

### Table 6

- Fencing should remain.
- There should be a charge for parking and enforcement of parking/stopping.
- Natural environment must be the focus and be a priority over tourism.

## 6. Closing Remarks

The presenters noted next steps in the process and contact information for the study and thanked everyone for their participation and feedback.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.

### Additional Resources

#### Meeting Summary

- Public Meeting #1 Presentation
- Summary of Break-out Session