



November 10, 2023

Mr. Adam Smith
Director of Planning and Building Services
Town of The Blue Mountains
32 Mill St, PO Box 310
Thornbury, ON

VIA EMAIL ONLY

Dear Mr. Smith,

**RE: Blue Vista
Draft Plan Park Block 119**

Please accept this letter as supplemental to the information regarding Park Block 119 and tree clearing correspondence and commentary provided by various parties at the October 30, 2023 meeting of Council.

While the concerns expressed regarding tree clearing on Block 119 are understandable, there is a fundamental land use planning and development basis and background that provides a foundational context. This includes legacy community planning parkland policy principles, the existing Official Plan parkland planning principles and the conclusion of a four-year design, study and approval process resulting in the Blue Vista Draft Plan of Subdivision.

We cannot speak to whatever was warranted to our westerly neighbours during the purchase and sale process in the Second Nature subdivision immediately to the west. We were not involved in the planning, engineering and approvals process that resulted in tree removal, grading and parkland configuration for the lands within Second Nature, including those lands abutting the lot from which some photographs were taken. We are aware that a similar tree removal and grading programme was essential for the developer to build and sell houses to the west. We are aware that grading and drainage engineering for Blue Vista must account for approved grading and drainage plans for Second Nature.

We do know that in our process, Blue Vista Block 119 was intended to be coordinated in terms of use (public park) and grading and drainage with the lands to west. We were also aware that residential lots that are in the approved Second Nature plan to the west are depicted in some of the photographs provided to Council. In our design, we acknowledged the fact that these lots backed onto a Second Nature public park and are flanked by a public trail block (see Figure 1). At this location, the Second Nature lots are also in proximity to Blue Vista lots. In fact, one of the photographs shown to Council show lands

approved for single detached lots in the approved Draft Plan. The continuation of similar residential types (single detached) was a conscious effort to maintain a consistent residential and open space land use approach that was established in the Second Nature plan.

This compatible approach is illustrated in Figure 1, below. The Second Nature public park is shown to the left (west) of the Blue Vista approved Draft Plan. Second Nature Lot 142 backs on to a public park (Block 148) and flanks a future public trail designed as a key link integral to a public trial network. Block 148 is contiguous to Blue Vista public park Block 119. Blue Vista Lot 92 flanks the public open space block as does Second Nature lot 142.

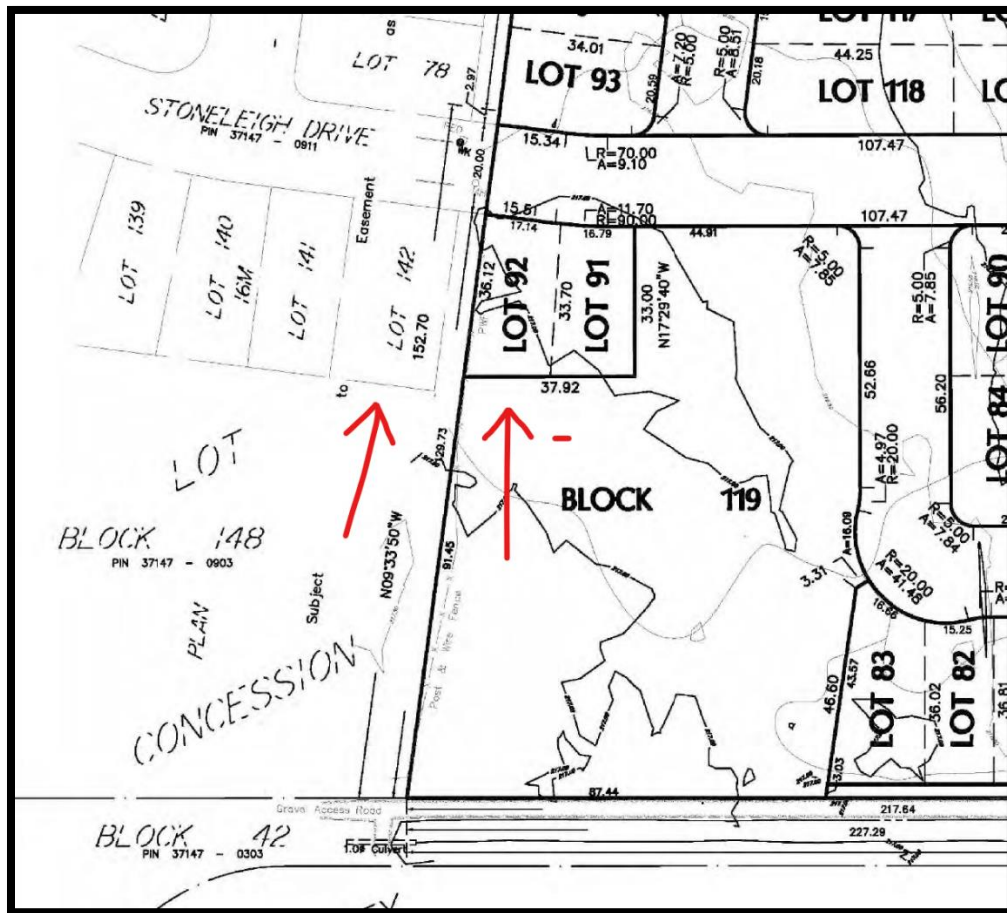


Figure 1: Excerpt of Blue Vista Draft Approved Plan Showing Second Nature Plan

Background

Park Block 119 resulted from detailed environmental, engineering and planning work. Its location, configuration and use are the result of four years of study, design, peer reviews, public meetings and agreements. It is also the result of Official Plan land use planning policy direction that goes back for over three decades.

Use of Block 119 lands general area for public park purposes was initially laid out in Official Plan land use designations dating back to the early 1990's and reiterated in the 2004 Official Plan. In the 2004 Official Plan a large "Park" designation for placed on an area centered on the northeast quadrant of what is now Windfall, and the southeast quadrant of Second Nature. Section 6.4.2 (1) (d) to that 2004 Official Plan states that this "large regional Proposed Park has been identified east of County Rd 19 near the Village Core. Outdoor sports fields and other recreation facilities should be concentrated in this area". These Official Plan directions were the basis for approvals for public parkland locations and configurations for Second Nature (1990's) and Windfall (2010).

The 2016 Official Plan did not carry this "Park" designation through on the Land Use Map. However, the 2016 Official Plan did expand on Parkland policies (Section D6). These policies directed that the Town shall require dedication of land identified for Park purposes and, when such land is conveyed to the Town it shall be conveyed in a physical condition satisfactory to the Town (D6.2.5). The Official Plan also provides polices on Parkland development and Parkland Classifications.

In implementing these directions, Draft Plan of Subdivision approvals for Second Nature (late 1990's) and Windfall (2010) included provisions for conveyed public parkland blocks that are contiguous. Second Nature neighbourhood park is at about 2ha in area and the Windfall neighbourhood park is at about 3ha.

Designing the Blue Vista Draft Plan of Subdivision started in 2018 and included as one of its development principles that the 5% parkland to be conveyed to the municipality. It was determined that the parkland should be about 1ha in size and located in the southwest quadrant. This would place the required parkland adjacent to the two major blocks provided through the Second Nature and Windfall subdivisions. The resulting larger municipal parkland block (approximately 6ha) would lend itself to a coordinated parkland development plan suited to the needs of the three neighbourhoods.

It has been anticipated that collectively, the approximately 6ha of public parkland would be large enough to offer an overall programme consisting of natural, passive and active recreational features suitable to meet community scale public park needs.

Blue Vista was subject to extensive environmental study and review. The comprehensive EIS was subject to reviews, comments and acceptance by the NVCA, GSCA, Grey County and a Peer Reviewer. The EIS concluded that the south west quadrant area (including Block 119) is a low value Ecological Land Classification (ELC) area comprised of Dry Fresh Hawthorn, White Cedar woodland, Native mixed regeneration thicket and, Dry Fresh Poplar Deciduous Forest. From an ecological point of view, these lands are suitable for re-purposing for active public parkland leisure activities. Again, we stress that the ELC low value assessment and classification was subject to extensive NVCA and Peer Reviewer assessments.

In weighing the land use needs of the broader community with the preferred location and use of lands for public park purposes, Block 119 was Draft Approved as a public park block. It is generally acknowledged that area residents are amply served with generous amounts of open space. As planning approval

requirements, Windfall, Blue Vista and Second Nature had to provide a 40% open space requirement. However, most of that open space is accounted for as protected woodlands. There is not an ample supply of active recreational space suitable for outdoor sport that is typically found in municipal neighbourhood parks.

In addition to the large, active use community scale park (Blue Vista, Second Nature, and Windfall combined), there remains a significant amount of land within each of the three subdivisions that is zoned Hazard, and which will remain fully vegetated, and within which there is an extensive network of public use trails (existing or proposed).

Throughout the Blue Vista planning process, it was acknowledged that the Block 119 lands were ideally suited for a programmed municipal active neighbourhood park that would serve the needs of the Windfall/Second Nature/Blue Vista communities. The programming of that facility has not, yet, been defined.

To reflect the Block 119 potential active recreational use, Condition 34 to the July 14, 2022 Draft Plan Approval required the following:

34. That the Owner shall remove all identified trees from the Public Parkland Block 119, rough grade such that best efforts are taken to ensure there is no standing water and shall be maintained in general conformance with the approved comprehensive grading plan. The Owner shall further agree in the Subdivision Agreement to topsoil and seed all rough graded areas.

In implementing conditions to Draft Approval various detailed plans have been prepared, including a plan identifying woodland removal areas. The basis for the removal areas was the ELC assessment noted previously.

Summary

The planning and development of the Blue Vista subdivision mirrors, for the most part, the process and requirements found in the adjacent residential subdivisions. This is because the same overall policies and requirements that have been established and upgraded over the years apply.

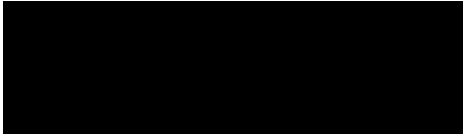
Blue Vista is required to grade, topsoil and seed Block 119.

The intended use of the subject lands for public park purposes has long been established. Acquisition of these lands has been purposefully acquired by the Town under provisions of its Official Plan and the Planning Act. The resulting land base is now ready for a detailed parks plan.

It is a commonly accepted observation that more people are choosing this part of the Blue Mountains to call a full-time home. Many new residents are arriving from communities that have a traditional hierarchy of public parks and open spaces. Anecdotal observations at Windfall suggest younger families are choosing to live full time. Combined, this necessitates balancing open space areas within the town: conserving natural heritage features while meeting the passive and active recreational needs of residents in various demographic cohorts.

Blue Vista is willing to further participate in the parks planning process, a process that can result in a balanced consideration of the parks and recreational needs of these three neighbourhoods, while supporting an overall Town of The Blue Mountains parks and recreation system of recreational open space.

Yours Truly,



Travis & Associates
Colin Travis MCIP RPP

Cc: TBM Council: Att Corrina Giles
Owner: Royalton Homes
Planning Department: Shawn Postma
Community Services: Ryan Gibbons
Tatham Engineering: Jeremy Acres
Crozier: Mike Hensel