

GUTTING CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES

Like a thief in the night, the Ontario government believed it could get away with inserting a host of changes to the province's conservation authorities within this year's budget bill that would denude the organizations of power over development applications.

It seems the government's stealth strategy was to hide the changes from municipalities and authorities and avoid following the traditional public engagement process by announcing the changes through the Environmental Bill of Rights, which requires a 30-day public input period.

But since the Ford government has been known for avoiding public consultation, it is no surprise that once the changes were discovered by conservation authorities a groundswell of opposition has steadily risen against the idea of potentially allowing development on floodplains and environmentally sensitive areas.

While critics are left scratching their heads about the reasoning behind the evisceration of the powers of conservation authorities, there is really no mystery. The PCs are simply rewarding their development industry pals who have long complained about the authorities' environmental laws obstructing their money-making ventures.

Conservation authorities have been empowered to control flooding, and restoring the land, water and natural habitats of the province. They have done such a great job, that developers consider them a main threat to their ability to build.

Among the changes contained in Bill 229 include shifting any decision-making power about the watershed from the authorities to the minister, allowing planning applicants to appeal a development decision to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal, removing conservation authorities' power to issue stop work orders when catastrophic damage is occurring in a protected area, and — the true mystery — eliminating citizen members on authority boards.

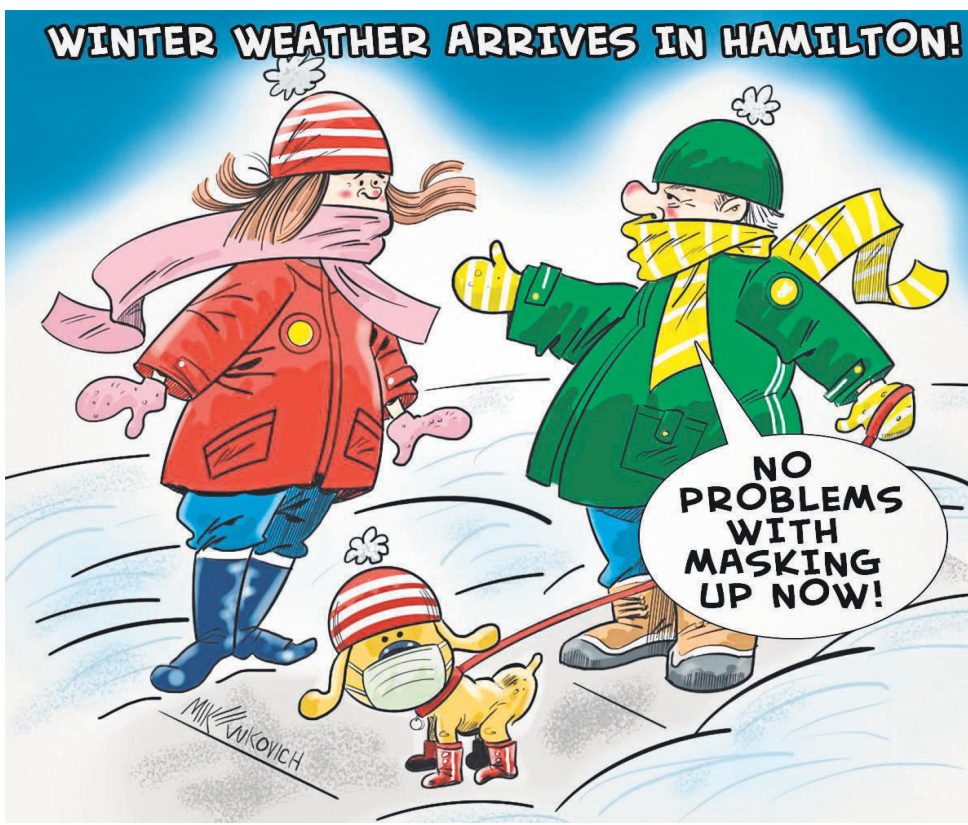
If the proposed changes are adopted, any river, floodplain, wetland, Great Lakes shoreline, even any water supply will be at the mercy of erosion, degradation and neglect.

If the government actually wanted to improve the work of conservation authorities, start by returning the funding that was taken away from them. Next, streamline the rules to make municipalities and conservation authorities adhere to tighter deadlines to complete planning reviews.

It is no secret that the Ford government has been itching to help its business friends, from threatening to open up the Greenbelt for more development, building highways through prime farmland, exploiting the Niagara Escarpment's natural wonders for aggregates to cutting "red tape" in an effort to streamline the economy at the expense of the protecting the province's biodiversity.

It is quickly apparent, the government's goal is not to improve efficiently or hold authorities accountable, but it is to eliminate a persist thorn in the side of developers and back their money-for-nothing agenda at the expense of the future of Ontario's environment.

TO LEARN HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR OWN CONTENT VISIT HAMILTONNEWS.COM



LETTERS & COMMENTARY

DEVELOPMENT INCOMPATIBLE

The proposal by Columbia College to develop the site at 574 Northcliffe Ave. contradicts many environmental and development standards.

Although repurposing this amazing property, formerly a convent for the Sisters of St. Joseph, is certainly desirable, its location in an eco-sensitive area does not support a 1,000-student school with staff.

A college of this size would be better situated in an urban area, close to transit, amenities, and existing infrastructure.

If we have any hope of halting climate change and conserving our precious green spaces, it is imperative that large development projects are not permitted in rural, ecologically sensitive, greenbelt or wetland locations.

MARGOT CARNAHAN,
DUNDAS

POT SHOP DOESN'T BELONG

I recently read that an application for a marijuana shop in the residential

neighbourhood of Perth Park (Hatton Drive, Ancaster) was approved.

Clearly the many objections of safety from the neighbourhood were silenced by the monetary value of this economic activity.

I have two wishes. First is that the people boycott this location in favour of one of the two existing pot shops approved for Ancaster.

Secondly is that each board member of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario be allowed to experience of the total spectrum of the marijuana-using community firsthand as they invade their residential neighbourhood.

JIM GILLATLY,
ANCASTER

JUST ACCEPT IT

So, it's the final game of the best of seven series, the Reds against the Blues, for the national championship. The Reds are not doing well, with batter after batter striking or grounding out, while the Blues scratch out some runs. The

Reds manager, Donald Chump, described as "feisty" by his friends and "an idiot" by others, is getting more and more upset, especially when a Blues star steals second base. Immediately, Donald was in the umpire's face, screaming, "It was not a legal steal," despite video replays showing the batter was clearly safe.

With the Blues at bat, the Reds relief pitcher wanted a strike called, and it wasn't, so Donald again ran up to the plate ump and told him he was fired. The chief umpire explained that he could not do that, so he was fired also.

Finally, the exasperated umpires tossed Donald Chump from the game, with loud cheers of relief from at least half the crowd. The final score was Blues 4, Reds 1 — but fans yelled that they had been robbed. Seems they had trouble reading the scoreboard.

Moral of the story: you win some, you lose some. Accept it.

SIMON IRVING,
DUNDAS

ABOUT US

This newspaper, published every Thursday, is a division of the Metroland Media Group Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. The Metroland family of newspapers is comprised of more than 70 community publications across Ontario.

This newspaper is a member of the National NewsMedia Council. Complainants are urged to bring their concerns to the attention of the newspaper and, if not satisfied, write The National NewsMedia Council, Suite 200, 890 Yonge St., Toronto, ON M4W 2H2. Phone: 416-340-1981. Web: www.mediacouncil.ca

nnc
National
NewsMedia Council

ocna

mpearson@hamiltonnews.com
facebook.com/HamiltonCommunityNewsOfficial
@StoneyCreekNews

WHO WE ARE

VP, Regional Publisher

Kelly Montague

General Manager

Nelson Parreira

Group Managing Editor

Gordon Cameron

Stoney Creek News Editor

Mike Pearson

Director of Advertising

Melinda Therrien Bos

Office Manager

Lorna Lester

Regional Production Manager

Joel Billinghamurst

CONTACT US

Stoney Creek News

333 Arvin Ave.

Stoney Creek, ON L8E 2M6

Phone: 905-523-5800

Fax: 905-664-3319

Web: www.hamiltonnews.com

Letters to the editor

All letters must be fewer than 320 words and include your name and telephone number for verification purposes. We reserve the right to edit, condense or reject letters. Published letters will appear in print and/or online at hamiltonnews.com

Delivery

For all delivery inquiries, e-mail customerservice@metroland.com or call 1-866-838-8960.

Accrédité
FDSA
Accredited