

Cara van Donkersgoed and Curtis McCoy

■ Echo Drive
Guelph, Ontario ■

June 26, 2024

City Clerk's Office
City of Guelph
1 Carden Street
Guelph, ON N1H 3A1

Re: Committee of the Whole Agenda Item 7.1, report titled Mayoral Direction B3 – Strategic Real Estate Partnerships on Underutilized City-Owned Assets dated July 3, 2024, to be discussed on July 3, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

Dear City Councillors:

I was shocked to learn that two parks in Guelph have been identified as sites to build housing. I am writing to express my deep concern about this proposal.

I was surprised that Hugh Guthrie Park is considered underutilized. As a long-time resident of Guelph I cherish this park. I have fond memories from my childhood of playing in this park. Nowadays I visit the park and I see others there as well. It is a tranquil spot and a lovely respite from the urban environment.

The report suggests that if a park is used spontaneously, and not for city programmed activities, it is fair game for development. A park should be spontaneous. It's a park! That's the whole point. You can go to the park any time. It is always there. It is accessible. That is one of the beautiful things about parks.

I understand the need for responsible urban development to accommodate housing demands. Some will argue that they are only taking a section of Hugh Guthrie Park. I walked to the park to see the development site and counted 28 mature trees that will be removed. One of the best features of Hugh Guthrie Park are the trees. They create an attractive buffer between Edinburgh Road and the rest of the park.

Please don't shrink our parks and cut down our trees. If we lose parkland to development, it is lost forever. Parks are one of the greatest assets of our city. Our lovely parkland is one of the reasons people choose to live in Guelph. And as we continue to grow and become more crowded, and fight more and more traffic, we will have ever more need for the respite our parks provide.

Before proceeding with any decisions, I urge the City Council to thoroughly consider alternative options for housing development that would not involve encroaching upon our parkland. As indicated in the report, several possibilities have already been identified.

Sincerely,

Cara van Donkersgoed