

Oct 5, 2023

Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
200 University Ave #801
Toronto, ON
M5H 3C6

Dear AMO Members:

Re: Challenges Faced by Smaller Developers in Ontario Communities

This is to confirm that at the Sept 25, 2023 Council Meeting the following resolution was adopted with respect to the above noted matter:

That, a letter be drafted for signature by the Mayor and that the letter be forwarded to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and its member municipalities, outlining the issues and constraints brought to the Township Council's attention with respect to holding back development applications of new homes within the community.

The Township of West Lincoln is writing to bring to your attention a significant matter that has recently come to our attention at the Township of West Lincoln. This issue pertains to the challenges faced by small developers in communities like ours, across the province of Ontario. These challenges are currently making it difficult for communities like West Lincoln to meet the housing goals of the province.

We recently received a request from a developer regarding their development project in Smithville, Ontario which was first draft approved approximately in 2015. The developer has presented a compelling case for an extension to the draft plan of condo approval, citing several noteworthy factors that have emerged since their initial application and which are delaying the start of development. Initially Council wanted to refuse extension approval to force the development but it was clear that would not be possible. The challenges are a symptom of broader issues felt by the Municipality on numerous planning issues, and some of these challenges as outlined to us by the developer, are noted below.

A significant challenge is the current state of the market, characterized by severe material supply chain constraints. These constraints have made it exceedingly difficult for the developer to secure pricing for essential construction materials, introducing financial uncertainty. An extension is deemed necessary to ensure the viability of the project, which aligns with our community's need for diverse housing options.

Furthermore, the recent and unexpected increase in interest rates by the Bank of

Canada has created volatility in the marketplace for pre-sale condo townhomes. These rate hikes have affected both the developer's financing costs and potential buyer's ability to secure financing. An extension would provide the developer with the opportunity to adapt their financial strategies in response to this rapidly changing environment.

Additionally, the challenging market conditions in the Niagara Region, as indicated by the Niagara Association of Realtors, have led to declining home values and shifting market dynamics. These changes necessitate a reassessment of the project timelines, for dwelling types and sizes, to ensure its long-term viability and success. Granting an extension will allow the developer to adapt to these current market dynamics and make informed decisions.

Importantly, extending the draft plan of condo approval would help conserve our Township's valuable resources. Re-submitting the entire approval package and undergoing the approval process again would be resource-intensive for both the developer and our local government. We believe that an extension at this time is a pragmatic solution that aligns with efficient resource utilization.

In light of these challenges, our commitment to supporting responsible and sustainable development in our community, and a desire to help address the identified housing shortfall, we kindly request that AMO and the Provincial government consider the current issues faced by developers in communities across Ontario. The challenges outlined by this developer reflect a broader trend that warrants attention and will severely hamper the ability to achieve increased housing starts if not addressed.

We recommend that the decision-making process for future planning applications be allowed to be guided by a balanced approach that takes into account market conditions, historical precedence, and resource conservation. This approach should ultimately contribute to provide much-needed housing supply to communities like West Lincoln, albeit at slower rates than first contemplated.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and believe that addressing these challenges will help promote equitable development opportunities across the province. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you require any additional information or clarification on this issue.

We look forward to collaborating with AMO and the Provincial government to find solutions that support the growth and vitality of our community and others like it.

Sincerely,



Mayor Cheryl Ganann
cc.. Minister Paul Calandra
All AMO member municipalities