

Ottawa City Council / Conseil Municipal d'Ottawa
Motion

Meeting date / Date de la réunion : 14 January 2026

Agenda No. / Ordre du jour no : 72

Item No. on Agenda / Point no de l'ordre du jour : 11

Re / Objet : Clarifying the City's Position on Kanata Lakes Golf and Country Club Lands

Moved by / Motion de : Councillor C. Curry

Seconded by / Appuyée par : Councillor G. Gower

WHEREAS the lands commonly known as the Kanata Lakes Golf and Country Club have historically functioned as a significant green space within the Kanata Lakes community; and

WHEREAS in or about 1981, agreements associated with planning approvals for the development of Kanata Lakes (the “40% agreement”) contemplated that approximately forty per cent (40%) of lands within the broader Kanata Lakes development area would be retained as open space, including golf course lands; and

WHEREAS the planning framework applicable to Kanata Lakes relied in part on the retention of significant open space lands; and

WHEREAS recent Ontario Land Tribunal decisions respecting the subject lands have confirmed that Council must not fetter its discretion and that planning approvals, refusals, and conditions must be supported by planning evidence, statutory authority, and the public interest; and

WHEREAS Council acknowledges Ontario Land Tribunal jurisprudence respecting the imposition, scope, and enforceability of extensive conditions of approval, including the importance of clarity, relevance, and statutory authority; and

WHEREAS the retention of the Kanata Lakes Golf and Country Club lands as open space formed a fundamental component of the planning rationale relied upon by the City and relied upon by residents when purchasing homes within the Kanata Lakes community; and

WHEREAS residents and the municipality reasonably relied on representations and planning instruments indicating that, should the lands no longer be used as a golf course, the lands were intended to remain as open space for the benefit of the community rather than be redeveloped for urban residential purposes; and

WHEREAS the removal of these lands from the community's open space system would undermine the integrity of the original planning bargain that enabled the broader Kanata Lakes development to proceed at increased densities; and

WHEREAS attempts by the current landowner to urbanize lands long held out as permanent or enduring open space raise concerns respecting fairness, good faith, and the integrity of the planning process relied upon by the City and its residents; and

WHEREAS permitting residential or other urban development on the subject lands would result in the loss of irreplaceable community green space while conferring a significant private windfall that was not contemplated when the original planning approvals were granted; and

WHEREAS Council is aware that portions of the subject lands are affected by documented mercury contamination and are subject to covenants, agreements, and environmental controls intended to limit soil disturbance and prevent the release or mobilization of contaminants into groundwater and the broader water table; and

WHEREAS The disturbance of contaminated soils presents potential risks to groundwater, downstream ecosystems, and public health, and the application of precautionary and risk-management principles is therefore relevant to the public interest and to Council's consideration of any proposal that would materially alter the use or physical condition of the subject lands; and

WHEREAS Council has an obligation to ensure that good planning practices are employed and to consider not only technical planning conformity but also the broader public interest, including the protection of community trust in the planning system and the avoidance of outcomes that effectively deprive the municipality and its residents of lands they were led to believe would remain as open space; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council affirms, as a matter of policy, that residential or other urban development on the Kanata Lakes Golf and Country Club lands referenced in the 40% agreement would be inconsistent with the planning framework under which Kanata Lakes was developed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Council directs staff, subject always to applicable legislation, Ontario Land Tribunal jurisprudence, and the requirement to consider each application on its merits, to:

- rigorously evaluate any application proposing residential or other urban development on the subject lands against the City's Official Plan, applicable secondary plans, and supporting planning evidence;
- ensure that good planning practices are employed and the public interest (including the public interest in keeping to established agreements respecting potential urban development) is protected when providing planning recommendations to Council;
- where the Ontario Land Tribunal grants or imposes approvals, ensure that any conditions sought or administered by the City are authorized by statute, directly related to the development, and capable of implementation, including where conditions are numerous or complex;
- continue defending Council's decisions before the Ontario Land Tribunal and any appellate courts, where directed by Council, based on planning evidence and consistent with Tribunal guidance;
- refuse to make any modifications to land interests held by the City to accommodate residential or other urban development on the subject lands; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Council directs the City Solicitor, in consultation with the General Manager of Planning, Real Estate and Economic Development, to review and advise Council on the enforceability and current legal status of the 40% agreement and any related agreements or covenants; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that enforcement or other legal remedies only be pursued where advised that such actions are lawful and have a reasonable prospect of success in light of recent Tribunal and court decisions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Council directs staff to explore and report back on lawful, voluntary options to secure long-term protection of the subject lands as open space, including acquisition, application of conservation easements, or any other arrangements deemed to be in the City's interests, subject to Council approval and budget authority; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Council directs staff to report back to Council with a status update on actions taken pursuant to this motion, including how Ontario Land Tribunal decisions and conditions of approval have been addressed.