



Agenda Item 6.3
Deputation on Cost Sharing Agreement for Surplus Property
at 1524 Countryside Drive, Ward 9

Committee of Council – June 21, 2023 – Habitat for Humanity GTA Deputation

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Good afternoon. My name is Ene Underwood, CEO of Habitat for Humanity GTA. I am accompanied virtually by David Bronskill, a partner at Goodmans LLP who has been providing support on this matter on a pro bono basis.

Habitat for Humanity is proud to have been an affordable housing partner with the City of Brampton for over 20 years. In our history, we have delivered over 40 new affordable homeownership units here in the City of Brampton. The 15 homes planned for Countryside are part of the 30 new homes we are planning to complete within these next couple of years.

This conversation directly intersects with two of the four “Big Moves” City Council approved in your April 2021 [Housing Brampton Strategy & Action Plan](#), specifically, Big Move 2: Use of Public Land; and Big Move 3: Attainable Home Ownership.

Three years ago, recognizing the deepening affordability crisis across the GTA, we revised our homeownership model to be able to have even greater long-term impact. Today, Habitat GTA homeowners still experience the same strength, stability and pride of ownership that has always been true with Habitat for Humanity – but the equity gain on their mortgage is restricted to roughly correlate with inflation. We made this change so that going forward, when Habitat GTA families decide to use the equity they have built with us and move to market ownership, we will be able to buy the homes back and make them available to another qualified family.

So, when you think of the 15 homes planned for Countryside Drive, don’t just think a surplus land asset from which you have realized value. Don’t just think of the 15 families whose lives will be transformed once these homes are built in the next couple years. Don’t just think of the vacated rental units that become available when these families move in. Instead, roll the calendar forward and envision this cycle repeating itself again and again in the future as these homes and the new community they represent remain affordable. This is the opportunity of 1524 Countryside Drive.

Up until Countryside Drive, Brampton Council had made surplus land available to Habitat for Humanity at no cost. This was invaluable in helping us help you. When the City first approached us with the Countryside opportunity in late 2015, we assumed this would be the case again.

We were disappointed when Council ultimately chose to require us to buy Countryside at full market value, but we did the math, and concluded that given our commitment to continue to provide affordable housing solutions for the people of Brampton, we would proceed.

We appreciated the support of City staff in getting the ZBA and SPA through the approval process and we are anxious to get started 15 permanently affordable homeownership units built at Countryside.

When I recently learned through my team of that we were being told we needed to contribute another \$410,000 in a Cost Sharing Agreement that had not been mentioned in over four years of discussions, I assumed that an error had been made and that staff and Council would be quick to rectify it. This remains my hope and is the request that we are making today.

To be clear, when you are an affordable housing non-profit, every cost we incur translates to less ability to be an impactful partner. The more expensive a project becomes, the more we have to question whether we can justify proceeding versus focusing our limited resources on more economical projects in other areas where we work.

Before I turn it over to my colleague, David Bronskill, to provide more of the technical background, let me reiterate our desire to be your partners in affordable housing as we jointly rise to the challenge of the greatest affordable housing crisis Brampton has ever faced. I am appealing to you to keep us on track for building these 15 affordable homeownership homes at Countryside.