Dear Mr. Sampson et al,

I am a homeowner and full time resident at [redacted] Settlers Way and it has recently come to my attention that the Kandahar Park has been recently mentioned as a proposed site for new “attainable” housing.

This strikes me as odd as not long ago based on a simcoe.com news story (which I have provided the link to) suggested that “established” park properties had been stricken from the list in a motion passed by council.


However, members of council didn’t think it was a good idea to include parkland as part of the property search. They passed a motion to remove parkland from consideration for an attainable housing site. Staff will also work with the Attainable Housing Corporation to look at a list of potential sites, including private or government-own land.

If this motion was in fact passed how can the Heritage/Kandahar Park still be on the proposed list?

“Our parkland is a precious resource for our citizens,” said Deputy Mayor Odette Bartnicki.

Coun. Rob Sampson said “It doesn’t make any sense to me, to get rid of an already established park and move it somewhere else.”

In fact you were quoted in this article “It doesn’t make sense to me, to get rid of an already established park and move it somewhere else”. You then apparently contradicted your own statement in the attached “Heritage Park Article”… “Sampson said the park has a ball diamond and play area that is rarely used”… “I would argue that we should leave it in.” Does this suggest that you don’t think that Heritage/Kandahar Park is an established park because I can assure you that the residents of the area certainly consider it as such and I believe it is zoned as such in the Town Plan. There is a multitude of activity that takes place in this park, with the (so called) under utilized area being very well utilized by children, young, middle aged and older adults alike playing games such as baseball, football, frisbee, soccer, as well as the most important (have you read about obesity in Children specifically and others in general) just having land to “play” on, etc. In addition there are many people who run their dogs in this park. Do you live close to this park, if not how often are you there to suggest that it is rarely used?

I can understand the need for attainable housing and this should be a joint project with the private sector. The organization (the largest employer in TBM) that will benefit most from this attainable housing is “Blue Mountain Village”. Perhaps an onus should be placed on them to develop more affordable property for their current and potential employees. We can be assured that they are not going to abandon this very highly sought out recreational property.

If it is felt that more “sustainable” housing is required in this “specific” area perhaps a joint project between Tyrolean Village, Blue Mountain Village and the Town of Blue Mountains make sense. Tyrolean
Village has a significant amount of undeveloped property that would certainly be a better option than an established park, the only one within walking distance of the many properties already in this residential area.

My family uses this park on a daily basis in the spring, summer and fall just for the open space and in winter it is part of our “out the door” cross country snow shoeing and I know many of our neighbours in the area use the park as a park... it is not a preferred site for more housing.

Thank you all for your service to the community.

Sincerely,

Gavin
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Phone:
BLUE MOUNTAINS EYES FIVE PROPERTIES FOR ATTAINABLE HOUSING PROJECT

JOHN EDWARDS
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The Town of the Blue Mountains has five potential sites for its first attainable housing project.

A staff report on the properties was presented at a special committee-of-the-whole meeting on July 29.

Staff was directed last year to develop a list of criteria and properties that could be used for an attainable housing project.

The first property is the former school board lands, a 10-acre parcel of land located on Grey Road 19. The second property is the former waste disposal site located at 139 King St. in Thornbury. The third site is located near Blue Mountain Village on Gord Canning Drive, with the fourth being Heritage Park, located on Kandahar Lane.

All of these properties are owned by the municipality, but the fifth property is private land and the address has not been released.

Last year residents raised concerns when Moreau Park, the location of baseball diamonds in Thornbury, was included as a potential site for attainable housing.

While it was expected parkland was to be off limits, director of planning Nathan Wasterdrop said Heritage Park meets a number of the criteria for attainable housing.

Coun. Rob Sampson, chair of the Attainable Housing Corporation, felt the property should remain on the list.

The corporation will be developing a request for information (RFI) in the coming weeks in hopes of getting proposals from developers.

Sampson said the park has a play area and a ball diamond that is rarely used.

"I would argue we should leave it in," he said. "Developers may come back and say, 'it's too small.'"

Staff will be developing a parks master plan next year to look at all of the parkland in the municipality.

Coun. Rob Potter feels the town should "look for the highest and best use of the land."

Council is expected to debate the sites at a future meeting. The corporation is hoping to start construction on an attainable housing project next year.

The municipality has taken an aggressive stance on housing as it was a major issue in the last election.
Blue Mountains council says no to parkland for attainable housing site

NEWS Dec 10, 2018 by John Edwards  Collingwood Connection

An overflow crowd was on hand for the Committee of the Whole meeting on Monday. - John Edwards/Metroland

The Town of the Blue Mountains is moving forward with attainable housing.

But it won’t be built at Moreau Park.

Town staff brought forward a report that looked at town-owned land that could be used for the site of an attainable housing project.

The report included five sites, a former board of education property on Grey Road 19, a property on King Street, a property on Jozo Weider Boulevard, Heritage Park on Kandahar Lane and Moreau Park on Alfred Street, currently home to several baseball diamonds and a dog park.

An overflow crowd showed up to a committee of the whole meeting on Monday, many of whom were there to voice concerns over Moreau Park being on the list.

A group of about a dozen youngsters in baseball uniforms were in the front row, holding up signs.
Shawn Everitt, interim chief administrative officer (CAO) for the municipality, said staff was asked by the previous council to put together a list of potential sites and there were not any restrictions.

Everitt said they recognize the importance of the park and historical significance.

“The criteria is simply looking at properties that the town owns that are big enough to have an attainable housing project,” he said. “This report is only the beginning of a long process.”

However, members of council didn’t think it was a good idea to include parkland as part of the property search. They passed a motion to remove parkland from consideration for an attainable housing site. Staff will also work with the Attainable Housing Corporation to look at a list of potential sites, including private or government-own land.

“Our parkland is a precious resource for our citizens,” said Deputy Mayor Odette Bartnicki.

Coun. Rob Sampson said “It doesn’t make any sense to me, to get rid of an already established park and move it somewhere else.”

Mayor Alar Soever said a whisper campaign gave rise to the idea that Moreau Park was already picked as the site for attainable housing.

“It’s caused a lot of stress in the community,” he said. “There were some really malicious rumours and it caused a lot of sleepless nights.”

Attainable housing has been identified as a priority for the community and the town is looking at solving the issue.

Soever said the municipality is looking to Whistler as a model for attainable housing. He said British Columbia has a median house price of about $2.4 million and attainable house price is $750,000.

The report included potential prices for attainable housing units, ranging from $550 a month for one-bedroom apartments to $1,500 for a three-bedroom house.

Everitt said the town is in the early stages of an attainable housing plan, but they have received interest from the development community.
"I think attainable housing for The Blue Mountains is not one specific product,” Everitt said. “What works in Craigleith may not work in Thornbury. This whole discussion about attainable housing is about opportunity.”

The Tourism Labour Supply Task Force has identified attainable housing as a barrier to attracting employees to the region.