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January 16, 2021

Council of the Corporation of the Town of Newmarket
395 Mulock Drive
Newmarket, ON L3Y 4X7

re: official plan amendment submitted by Shining Hill Estates Collections Inc (the Applicant)

File number: D09NP2012

Dear Council of the Corporation of the Town of Newmarket:

I am writing to **speak against the application** by Shining Hill Estates Collections Inc. (the Applicant) to amend the Official Plan to re-designate the lands shown on the map provided in the Newmarket Era issue of December 10th, 2020 (and in the Applicant's submission materials available online at <https://tonfileshare.newmarket.ca/share.cgi?ssid=0eL61sH>).

I have been a **resident of Newmarket for more than twelve years**. I moved to Newmarket from Richmond Hill to enjoy its small town atmosphere with its beautiful quiet "countryside" and green spaces. Over the past decade, I have however seen too many developments (for example, along St. John's Sideroad east of Bayview), eroding the quality of life and environment that Newmarket and Aurora once provided. The proposal submitted by Shining Hill Estates Collections Inc. is a project that would further lead to this unnecessary erosion and is especially dangerous as it relates to building on the **protected Oak Ridges Moraine**.

The Applicant has already decimated beautiful virgin lands on the west side of Yonge street just north of St. John's sideroad, as part of their "Phase 1" of their project. While "Phase 2" is beyond the scope of this application and outside the jurisdiction of the Town of Newmarket, it is nonetheless part of their pattern to **eliminate important ecosystems through construction within the boundaries of the precious Oak Ridges Moraine**.

The proposed amendment aims at re-designating the lands from "Environmental Protection Area – Oak Ridges Moraine", "Stable Residential", and "Parks and Open Space" into "Site Specific Emerging Residential", "Parks and Open Space", "natural Heritage System" and "Environmental Protection Area – Oak Ridges Moraine". The Applicant however **fails to provide quantitative data** on the actual proportions of each of these four designations, including the new "natural Heritage System" BEFORE and AFTER completion of the proposed project.

This information is critical and should have been provided. The fact that the requested Official Plan Amendment "*provides a minimum 10 m buffer to woodlands and 30 m buffer to wetlands and watercourses*" is little comfort given the **considerable disruption of the ecosystem** that is at stake. It also appears from the Applicant Submission Materials that these woodlands, wetlands and watercourses will in fact **NOT be accessible** to local residents. Only owners of properties backing onto these lands will be able to enjoy these.

The proposed amendment will sadly lead to **construction within the boundaries of the Oak Ridges Moraine. The Town of Newmarket must absolutely continue to protect the Moraine.** Too many people have rightfully and successfully fought for its protection. Yet, too many projects have already been completed within its boundary. The Town has passed the Official Plan Amendment 28 (OPA 28) and designated the western portion of the Subject Lands as **Environmental Protection Area – Oak Ridges Moraine, thus prohibiting urban development.** The **Town MUST NOT give in to pressure from developers** who simply have profitability/earnings in mind. The additional tax revenues resulting from their development MUST NOT either be used as an argument to grant the proposed amendment.

The Applicant claims that the "*application presents an opportunity to locate growth on the farmed acreage... while providing adequate protection to the existing natural heritage features and functions.*" Those are empty words. Opportunities for growth are present elsewhere in non-protected areas. They propose transferring "*just under half (49%) of the entire Shining Hill landholdings*" to the Towns of Aurora and Newmarket. They however fail to present how this figure was arrived at: does it include roads, land proposed for school, etc. that the Town will then need to maintain? Regardless of what land would be transferred to the Towns, the development will greatly **fragment the land and greatly disrupt the ecosystem and wildlife of the protected Moraine.**

The Applicant also claims that "as this development is approved, approximately 76 hectares of natural heritage lands will be conveyed and made publicly accessible" and that the "Towns (of Aurora and Newmarket) can then program this space to meet their recreational space needs that **may not have been possible before.**" Let us not have developers dictate and derail the Town's development plan and cast doubt that something "may not" be possible. Where there is a will, there is a way! I am fully confident that The Towns would find a way if in fact necessary.

Residents of Newmarket need a variety of recreational venues. While we have many parks, trails and green spaces around town, the number of forests is vanishing quickly and this proposed amendment would simply accelerate this trend. Perhaps we should all remember the exceptional value and contributions that large protected parks and forested areas in cities such as New York City (**Central Park**), Montreal (**Mount Royal Park**) and Toronto (**High Park**) have on the well-being and quality of life of its residents. **Let us not lose this protected parcel of woodlands, wetlands and watercourses within the Oak Ridges Moraine.** We badly need to hold onto these unreplaceable **priceless green spaces.**

The Council must **uphold protection of the Oak Ridges Moraine.** Let the **Town of Newmarket be a champion and a model** for York Region and the Greater Toronto Area in protecting its land, its wildlife and its natural habitat. Newmarket must stop this destruction so that it can remain a "town" that is cherished by so many of us, and recognized nationwide as one of the **best places to live in Canada** by *MoneySense Magazine*. Let us keep Newmarket a livable and lovable community.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly urge the Council of Newmarket to **REFUSE the application** from Shining Hill Estates Collections Inc to amend the Official Plan to re-designate the lands.

Sincerely,

Gino G. Lavoie, PhD