

Dear Mayor Savage and members of HRM Council

I am writing you today regarding what is known as the “Southdale Future Growth Node”. This node, runs between the north end of the Woodside Industrial Park to Gaston Road and from Clement St to Highway 111.

There is currently a proposal, from Zzap Consulting and Clayton Development, on behalf of A.J. Legrow Holdings Limited, to build 700 units within this space. We have seen the renditions of what it could look like, but let me take you through what it currently looks like; which I have had the pleasure of showing, first-hand, to Councilor Sam Austin and former Dartmouth South MLA Marian Mancini, during one of my many walks with community members. Attached you will see a detailed map of one such walk.

This area, which is part of the Eisner Cove Wetland water course, which is report to run from at least Rodney Road and Portland Street (possibly from Maynard Lake). It is reported to travel under AANs 03564983, 00765481, 00140147 and into the subject property at AAN 09602860. In addition to these AANs, it runs along a section of fenced in park space owned by HRM, which runs between Hastings Drive and Fenwick Street.

Within two minutes of entering the subject area, coming off of Lynn Drive (beside AAN 01449958) you are immediately taken into another world. This is such a densely forested area that the sounds of urban Dartmouth vanish and you experience what it is like to be alone in a big city. As you walk along the shore of the water course, you begin to notice tracks in the snow. Some, such as the white-tailed deer tracks, are easy to identify. Some tracks, such as those of fox, raccoons, and other four legged creatures, are not so noticeable because of the melting snow. We, who live within distance of Eisner Cove, know all to well what creatures reside in these woods, because we see them in our own yards; sometimes as far away at Rodney Road, and now even on Pleasant Street. During a cold winter, you can walk down the middle of the water course, while still enjoying the quiet; you may even see a deer in the distance who isn't scared by you snapping a twig.

During the spring, summer and into fall, you can walk along the water's edge and see such birds as herons, sparrows, sharp shined hawks and, I believe, peregrine falcon. You will notice various flora as you walk: lichen, Tamarack (*Larix laricina*); Wild Raisins (*Virburnum nudum*); Indian Cucumber Root (*Medeola virginiana*); Pincushion Moss (*Leucobryum glaucum*), and; Bog Myrtle (*Myrica gale*). A more detailed list of both flora and fauna available at INaturalist's website (<https://www.inaturalist.org/places/eisner-cove-wetland>).

This proposal, which is the subject of much community concern and outrage, is proposed for the northern shore of the wetland's wooded area, which is, by far, the largest portion of the area. Therefore, one can logically expect, this is where the majority of the wildlife can be found. Indeed, most of the deer, seen year-round by residents, come from that very area of Lynn Drive mentioned previously.

By allowing such a large development it would mean the home of all this plant and wildlife will be destroyed; never to be rebuild. We've already seen how this destruction of the forest affected the plant and wildlife with the building of the Mount Hope Extension and all the development along Baker Drive near Mount Hope. We cannot see more destruction happen, we must protect what little urban habitat we have and you, as HRM Council, can take those steps.

Back in 2009 I had the extreme pleasure of sitting on the Penhorn Woodlawn Community Liaison Group (CLG) (<https://www.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/about-the-city/regional-community-planning/PenhornFinalVision.pdf>); in fact, I was elected Chair of that group. It was a way for HRM to consult with area residents on how they wanted their neighbourhoods, their communities, to look 5, 10, 25 years in the future. As part of our goals, we called for Eisner Cove Wetlands to be protected. As part of our Action Plan we called for HRM Council to build a boardwalk in the Cove. By allowing this proposed development, HRM Council is furthering one of the complaints I heard during the CLG process, *"It will be another report, done by HRM, that will be ignored and collect dust on a shelf, in a room nobody ever goes into."* You can do better.

Group Vision (pg 4):

"Eisner Cove wetland (which is bisected by Highway 111), and another on the north side of Russell Lake. Home to a number of white tailed deer, fox, sharpshinned hawks and other wildlife, the wetlands, although already impacted by surrounding development, are seen as valuable ecological assets to the community that should be protected. An elevated boardwalk in the wetlands, particularly Eisner Cove wetland behind Woodside Industrial Park, could improve community access to these areas while protecting the fragile wetland habitat."

Group Action Plan (pg 5):

"Develop a barrier free boardwalk through the Eisner Cove wetland in appropriate location to allow local residents and school children access to the acres of wilderness safely, without disturbing the sensitive flora and fauna."

While Chair of this committee, I had said, if HRM Council goes against the wishes of the community members, I will be one of the first to stand up and protest, so here I am. I am not oppose to development, I realize we need it for our city to grow; however, I am against development that destroys habitat and goes against what the community wants.

Much has been said about the need for affordable housing in HRM, and this proposal is actually making indications there will be some "attainable housing" available on the proposed 45 hectares. However, based on the interview on CBC (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/hrm-housing-development-dartmouth-700-units-southdale-growth-node-1.6310006?cmp=rss&fbclid=IwAR3oTW19NOwQAVJEoDjH7-aZHac-ubHaJ-4z-8Yed4ZEzkKZVbWLV7IjfgU>) "affordable" isn't being considered "Middle income, average households, should be able to buy a home." (Kevin Neatt, Vice-president Planning and Development with Clayton Development). In his own words, this is not affordable housing, this is cheaper housing for the middle class, or higher class, to purchase. Sure, some may be rented out, but at a cost that will help the owner pay for the mortgage, not at the widely, long held accepted, 30% of gross monthly income. Far too often a developer will, instead of putting in granite counter tops, in the kitchen, put laminate instead. The price comes down, but that's not affordable.

When I ran for City Council, in Dartmouth Centre, in 2012, I said, during an All-Candidate's Meeting at Alderney Theatre, "It's time for us to stop talking about affordable housing, and start doing something about it". I still believe that and, sad to say, I'm still saying it today, a decade later.

Back to the forested area and the wetland itself, and the concerns I have:

- 1) Loss of 45 hectares of wildlife habitat.

- 2) Improper Environmental Assessment, that is to say, being done once, at a specific time of year.
- 3) Potential contamination of water course and wetland.
- 4) Flooding
- 5) Traffic flow

1) I have already discussed my concerns and fears of loss of wildlife habitat, so I will not rehash what I've said.

2) I am worried that an Environmental impact study would be done only once, at the wrong time of year to fully appreciate the flora and fauna mentioned about. I am also concerned this being a potential habitat for peregrine falcons would be over looked. For your information, Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, in 1994, published an article, by Sherman Boates and Donald Sam, on their website. In this article, Boates and Sam talk about the recovery efforts in Nova Scotia for this endangered falcon; one of four species in Nova Scotia (<https://novascotia.ca/natr/wildlife/conserva/peregrine-falcon.asp>). While out for walks, or even sitting on our deck (about one minute walk from the western most boundary of the wetland, we have often witnessed what looks like peregrines flying over us. As we are use to seeing this lovely bird while living in Guelph, Ontario, we know what it looks like, but have never been able to a) get a photo, or; b) prove they nest back there. I would draw your attention to the 2017 "Peregrine Falcon (Falco peregrinus): COSEWIC assessment status report" where peregrines are listed as a species of "Special Concern" (<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/species-risk-public-registry/cosewic-assessments-status-reports/peregrine-falcon-2017.html>). If a proper assessment is done of the proposed area, and peregrines are found, then their habitat has to be protected.

3) Many area residents have raised their concerns about runoff that would end up in the wetland water course. With lawncare products, pet waste, and other contaminants used by homeowners (yes, I know pesticides and herbicides are not to be used in HRM, but we all know some homeowners still use them), the runoff into the water course would have a devastating impact on the flora and fauna of Eisner Cove. We've seen it in many other developments from across Canada and into the US (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/pesticide-contaminating-prairie-wetlands-scientist-1.2482082>).

4) Flooding will become a major concern as you are turning a permeable surface (forest floor) into multiple impermeable surfaces (asphalt, roofs, concrete, etc.).

5) Traffic flow is already a concern along Fenwick Street, Clement Street and Hastings Drive, especially at shift change in the Woodside Industrial Park. We can see dozens of vehicles coming off of Research Lane onto Fenwick and, depending on where they are going, onto Clement Street. Often times those drivers are speeding and driving on the wrong side of the road (when they turn off Hastings onto Clement they will often be in the oncoming traffic lane, and vis-versa). There are two schools in the area and Clement St Park, increased traffic flow will be of great concern to area residents. In addition, the proposal seems to indicate there would be an access point at Lynn Drive into the new development. Lynn Drive is currently a P-shaped street which has approximately 75 structures on it. The road is narrow and has a number of tight turns. I do not drive, but I can understand peoples concerns and frustrations about increased traffic along this relatively tiny street. I do live on Clement St and am very concerned about this here. On a given day—outside of a pandemic situation—you can see upwards of 200 school aged students coming down from Gaston Road, along the makeshift culvert path behind St.

Clement Church (16 Gaston Road), onto the bend of Hastings and Clement, where they branch off to go down either street to get to school. Safety and increased traffic flow is a big concern for residents.

Finally, like-minded citizens, who have been part of a growing group concerned about the loss of Eisner Cove Wetland, was formed back in 2016 called Friends of Eisner Cove Wetland. I would encourage you to visit our Facebook Group to hear our voices.

In closing, I invite the Mayor and City Councilors to contact me, and arrange for a walk through the area to see exactly what I, and many residents Dartmouth are calling an oasis in the middle of Dartmouth. Join me to see the wildlife, the plant life, the area that we are trying to save.

Sincerely,

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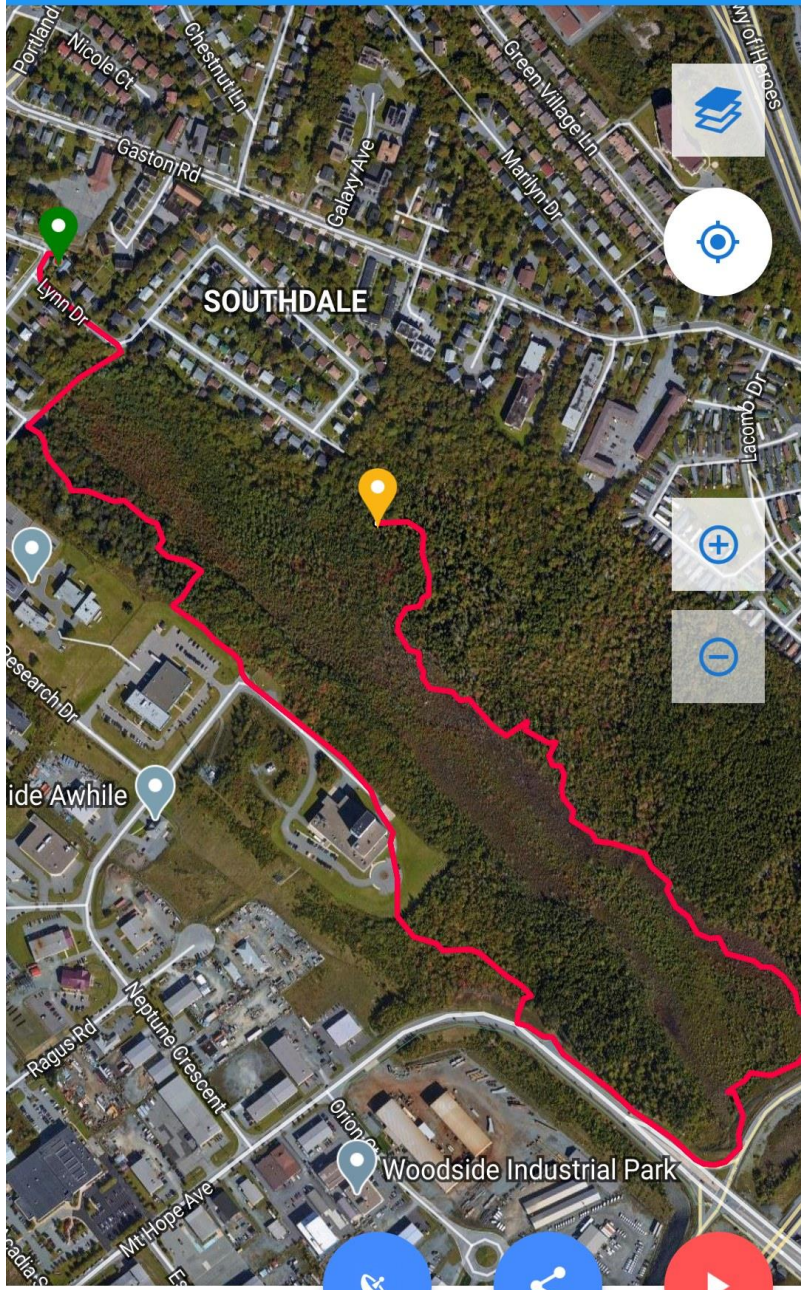
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