

Stonebridge Working Group Report to Councillors

September 10, 2019

Executive Summary

Since April 2019, the Stonebridge Working Group (SWG) has been working with Jack Stirling, the facilitator contracted by the City of Ottawa (City), to find a solution for the Stonebridge Golf Course acceptable to the Stonebridge Community (Community). The proposed solution has two components: one, an agreement to purchase 198 acres of golf course lands, and two, a means of funding the purchase of these lands. The details of the proposal were shared with the Community through a well-attended and live-streamed public meeting, multiple open houses, the Stonebridge Community Association (SCA) website and social media channels, and the SCA email newsletter. Feedback was received through a survey and at the public sessions. Based on all this, the SWG recommends that the three Councillors representing Stonebridge Community Wards 3, 21, and 22, present a request to the Finance and Economic Development Committee on October 1, 2019, for a special community levy of \$7M over 9 years, starting in the 2021 tax year.

Formation of the SWG and the Negotiation Path

In April 2019, Jack Stirling of The Stirling Group, contracted by the City to act as the facilitator, formed an 11 member working group of Stonebridge residents to participate in discussions with Mattamy Homes (Mattamy). The SWG, leveraging the extensive feedback received from residents¹, was asked to suggest a path forward with Mattamy that would be in the best interests of the Community and its residents. From April through July, the SWG met twice a week with Mr. Stirling focusing on “three key pillars” identified at the April public meeting, namely, preservation of the Stonebridge Golf Course, limiting residential development, and future Mattamy & Community initiatives. Mr. Stirling also held separate meetings with Mattamy senior executives regarding the three pillars. The SWG also held meetings with various experts, such as senior City staff and third-party golf course operators, to acquire additional information.

The SWG and Mattamy held joint meetings starting in late May to work out a draft agreement in principle. Enough common ground was found to allow the SWG to present the proposal to the Community.

¹ This issue started in June 2018 with a development application by Mattamy that was subsequently withdrawn. Between June 2018-April 2019, the Stonebridge Community Association was the lead in determining and representing the Community views with respect to the issue. This included a comprehensive community-wide survey (over 1000 households participated) and various public meetings held in conjunction with the City of Ottawa. All of this was taken into account by the SWG.

The Proposal

The SWG presented the proposal on July 30th at a Public Meeting. Over 400 people attended. The proposal advances the Community's wish to preserve the lands as either a golf course and/or green space while recognizing Mattamy's rights as the private owner of the lands.

The SWG believes that the proposal, if accepted by the Community, will provide assurance to the Community that no further development will occur on the golf course lands after the proposed Phase 16, that the property values for all homes in the Community will be preserved, and that the residents of Stonebridge will continue to enjoy their quality of life.

The proposal has 2 components. The first part of the proposal involves Mattamy agreeing to redesign the golf course to a par 70/6,000 yard course, to maintain the golf course's Audubon certification, to keep operating the golf course to its current high standards for not less than 10 years, to provide not less than 2 years notice to the Community in the event it decides to leave the golf course business, and to provide the Community the first option to acquire the lands for a fixed price of \$6 million on the condition that those lands be used ONLY for the operation of a golf course or as passive green space. In exchange for this, Mattamy will apply to develop Phase 16, a development of approximately 158 units. The proposed Phase 16 would be consistent with Stonebridge standards.

The second part of the proposal consists of finding a way to finance the acquisition of the lands by 2029. The SWG has been working with the City on a funding mechanism that will provide the necessary funds when needed, namely, a City-administered special community levy for which a community-wide vote would be required later in the Fall of 2019. The funds to be raised by the levy, starting in 2021, over a period of 9 years, would cover the land acquisition, taxes, legal fees and a reserve fund to be applied either to continuing to operate the golf course or to convert the lands to passive green space.

Community Outreach

The SWG provided the Community of approximately 3300 households with regular updates using the SCA's 2300+ opt-in email list plus the email addresses received during the various public meetings (distribution list). Notifications of the updates were also posted on social media. In addition, the 3 community billboards on Longfields Drive at the club house, Greenback/Sunita and Longfields/Jockvale, and a direct mail campaign through Canada Post were used to notify all households in the proposed catchment area of the Public Meeting held on July 30th to present the proposal to the Community. The Councillors' offices and the media were also informed. The Public Meeting was live

streamed on Facebook, was covered by the media and, later, a column on the proposal was published in the Ottawa Citizen.

Survey and Additional Feedback

At the conclusion of the Public Meeting, the presentation was posted on the SCA website, social media and subsequently emailed to everyone on the SCA distribution list. A survey on SurveyMonkey was announced to elicit community feedback. The community billboards, SCA website, emails, and social media were again used to encourage the Community to respond to the survey.

To ensure that the Community was well informed and that the SWG had sufficient input from the Community, the SWG and Jack Stirling made themselves available to address hundreds of questions on SCA social media channels, the SCA website, email, phone and at several scheduled public in-person sessions including three five hour Q&A sessions. The sessions were done in one-on-one discussions and in small groups to give everyone an opportunity to be heard. The SWG also accommodated requests from particular resident groups (eg, street groups) that wished to meet and discuss the proposal.

Survey Results

The survey ran for three weeks until August 20th and was used to gauge community sentiment. Responses were collected from 1368 individuals. After applying a filter to include only homeowners living in the Community and to only include completed surveys, the total number of responses used for analysis purposes was 1039 in a community of approximately 3300 households. The number of responses was more than large enough to ensure statistical validity.

The survey had two important multiple-choice questions as well as a series of open-ended questions that offered residents an opportunity to share their thoughts in more detail.

The First Survey Question: **What is your first reaction to the proposed solution?**

Very positive: 27%
Somewhat positive: 29%
Neutral: 8%
Somewhat negative: 15%
Very negative: 20%

The Second Survey Question: **If a vote on the levy was to be held today, how likely would you be to vote in favour of it?**

Extremely likely: 29%
Very likely: 19%
Somewhat likely: 16%
Not so likely: 12%
Not at all likely: 25%

Thus, with 56% positive first reactions to the proposed solution, 64% likely to vote in favour of the levy, and ongoing input throughout the process, the SWG believes that the Community has demonstrated enough interest to recommend that the City conduct a formal vote on the levy proposal.

The Open-Ended Questions:

In your own words, what are the things that you like most about this proposed solution?

In your own words, what are the things that you would most like to improve in this proposed solution?

Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns?

Out of the 1039 residents that completed the survey, the vast majority provided detailed and lengthy comments to the open-ended questions. The SWG used these comments to create FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) to address compliments, concerns and misunderstandings with the proposal. To keep the Community informed, the FAQs have been emailed to the distribution list and posted on multiple social media channels and on the SCA website.

The comments indicated that the Community had further questions and concerns regarding some key themes, such as, ownership of the land, the levy process, details of the agreement including how to ensure no future development of the lands by anyone, including the City, and certainty that the levy funds raised will be used for the intended purpose. The SWG will continue to use these and future comments in its ongoing work to refine the proposal. Another SWG community-wide meeting is scheduled for September 30th, 2019.

Recommendation

Based on all of the information and feedback the SWG has received over the past five months and counting, the SWG recommends that the three Councillors representing Stonebridge Community Wards 3, 21, and 22 present a request to the Finance and Economic Development Committee meeting on October 1, 2019, for a special community levy of \$7M over 9 years, starting in the 2021 tax year.

Thank you.

Reference Material

Members of the SWG

Aline Gossein

Mike Kujawski, SCA Board member

James MacRae

Jay McLean, SCA Board member

Stephanie Newell, SCA Board member (now retired)

Nicole Parent

Ron Reddick, SCA Board member (now retired)

Niraj Singhal, SCA Board member

Karin Taylor

Spencer Warren (now retired)

Brad Wright

Senior Mattamy Homes Representatives

Kevin O'Shea - President, Ottawa Division

Kevin Murphy - Vice President, Land Development, Ottawa Division

Patrick Dion - Public Relations, Consultant

City-appointed Facilitator

Jack Stirling, The Stirling Group

Formal Communication by SWG with the Stonebridge Community

April 28, 2019 - Stonebridge Working Group (SWG) has been selected

<https://www.stonebridgeca.com/golf-course-development-update-working-group-has-been-selected/?v=3e8d115eb4b3>

May 7, 2019 - SWG Meeting Schedule and Discussion Topics

<https://www.stonebridgeca.com/golf-course-development-update-from-the-stonebridge-working-group-may-7-2019/?v=3e8d115eb4b3>

May 22, 2019 - Update on Joint Meeting with Mattamy May 21st

<https://www.stonebridgeca.com/golf-course-development-update-may-22/?v=3e8d115eb4b3>

July 5, 2019 - July 30th Community Meeting Announcement

<https://www.stonebridgeca.com/important-community-meeting-announcement/?v=3e8d115eb4b3>

July 30, 2019 - Proposed Solution Presentation Released

<https://www.stonebridgeca.com/swg-community-presentation-re-future-of-the-golf-course-is-now-up/?v=3e8d115eb4b3>

August 4, 2019 - July 30th Meeting Summary and Follow-up

<https://www.stonebridgeca.com/swg-july-30th-community-meeting-follow-up/?v=3e8d115eb4b3>

August 8, 2019 - Online FAQ Released

<https://www.stonebridgeca.com/swg-proposed-solution-faqs-posted/?v=3e8d115eb4b3>

August 8, 2019 - Open House Drop-In Sessions Announced

<https://www.stonebridgeca.com/swg-proposed-solution-open-q-a-drop-in-sessions-coming-up/?v=3e8d115eb4b3>

August 19, 2019 - FAQ #2 Released - Reminder of Survey Deadline on August 20th

<https://www.stonebridgeca.com/swg-proposed-solution-swg-faq-2-released-survey-open-until-august-20th/?v=3e8d115eb4b3>

September 3, 2019 - SWG Proposed Solution - Survey Results Released

<https://www.stonebridgeca.com/swg-proposed-solution-community-survey-results/?v=3e8d115eb4b3>

All communications were issued on all SCA channels including email, website, Facebook and Twitter. The SCA has a strong reach in the community, email 2300+, Facebook 2100+ followers, as a direct result of a community-wide door to door canvassing effort during the summer of 2018 to connect the community, undertaken by over 50 Stonebridge Community volunteers.

SWG Outreach Meetings

Public Community Meeting:

July 30, 2019 from 7pm to 9pm, St. Joseph's High School

September 30, 2019 from 7pm to 9pm, Nepean Sportsplex

Open House Sessions:

August 12, 2019 from 3pm to 8pm, Stonebridge Golf Course Clubhouse

August 13, 2019 from 3pm to 8pm, Stonebridge Golf Course Clubhouse

August 20, 2019 from 3pm to 8pm, Stonebridge Golf Course Clubhouse

Street Specific Meeting (Sandgate and Shadehill):

August 21, 2019 from 7pm to 9pm, Minto Recreation Complex Barrhaven

Street Specific Meeting (Culloden):

August 8, 2019 from 7pm to 9pm, Home of Culloden Resident

Community Group Requested Meeting:

September 4, 2019 7pm to 9pm, Stonebridge Golf Course Clubhouse

Numerous one-on-one meetings or phone calls with residents and Jack Stirling

Media Coverage of Public Meeting and Proposal

July 31, 2019 - CBC News: Developer tries to win Stonebridge over with new golf course plan

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/stonebridge-golf-course-ottawa-plan-1.5230781>

July 31, 2019 - CTV News: Proposal put forward for Mattamy Homes to develop part of Stonebridge golf course

<https://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/proposal-put-forward-for-mattamy-homes-to-develop-part-of-stonebridge-golf-course-1.4530739>

August 13, 2019 - Ottawa Citizen: Stonebridge and Mattamy show compromise is possible over development in Ottawa

<https://ottawacitizen.com/opinion/columnists/denley-stonebridge-and-mattamy-show-compromise-is-possible-over-development-in-ottawa>