

Committee defers ruling on Mary Lake variances

By Mark PavilonsEditor

King's Committee of Adjustment held off ruling on minor variances related to a long-term care facility at Mary Lake. The committee meeting Wednesday evening went late into the night. After being bombarded with more than a dozen citizen delegations and receiving 29 letters of objection, the committee decided to hold a special meeting this coming Wednesday, April 26 to reconsider the matter. The decision came after a lengthy, closed-door session in which committee members received legal advice. The chair for the evening, Cleve Mortelliti, noted this was the newly appointed committee's second meeting of the year and they were saddled with a complex and controversial issue. Members wanted more information and details from staff before voting on it. While the minor variances dealt with the size of the proposed expansion, parking and height issues, the majority of the delegations spoke out against the idea of the LTC and that it's inappropriate on Oak Ridges Moraine land. Mortelliti instructed presenters to stick to the issues at hand ? the minor variances ? but given the controversial nature of the topic, his pleas fell on deaf ears. The majority of residents also called for a deferral of the matter, and some recommended it be directed back to council. The complications revolve around making decisions using two Countryside bylaws; the previous one and the most recent passed by council, which isn't technically in effect. It's being appealed and if/when it comes into force, its regulations would be retroactive. This complication altered Mary Lake's plans and under the new bylaw, it's considered a legal, non-conforming use, requiring the need for the variances. Mortelliti, at one point, asked staff why the committee is dealing with it, since council approved the use on the property back in 2021. An "abundance of caution" led to the committee's decision to get more data and details from staff, before the April 26 meeting.