

## Residents join forces, sign petition, to fight proposal at OLT

By Mark PavilonsEditor

Citizens are banding together to fight a proposed condo development in Schomberg. The applicants, Marcor Realty Ltd., have taken their proposal for a six-storey condo building on Main Street in Schomberg to the Ontario Land Tribunal. They appealed on the basis of a lack of timely decision on the part of King Township. A petition was recreated and organizers are hoping for 1,500 signatures before sending to the OLT. In the name of "saving our historic Schomberg Main Street," residents stress the village is more than a place on a map. It is neighbours who know each other. It is small businesses that greet you by name. It is the charm, history, and character of a Main Street that feels like home. The proposed 6-storey, 99-unit condo development at 326 Main Street would dramatically change the scale, character, and livability of the historic core. This building does not reflect the heritage homes and storefronts that stand proudly side by side. It does not reflect the small-town values that make Schomberg special. We believe in thoughtful growth. We believe in housing solutions that truly serve families. We believe in protecting what makes our town unique. This proposal, they contend, raises serious concerns: It overwhelms the historic streetscape with a structure out of scale with its surroundings. It adds significant traffic to a Main Street that already struggles with congestion and limited access. It reduces parking where businesses and residents already face shortages. It encroaches on the protected Dufferin Marsh natural areas and would remove all existing trees except one Manitoba Maple. Years of construction would deeply impact the small businesses that are the backbone of our community. The Main Street is walkable, but it's also crowded in terms of traffic - with bidirectional traffic and parking on both sides of the street it takes time and attention to safely make one's way along the street. This is not about being against progress. It is about protecting the character, safety, and future of our small town. Once the historic fabric of Main Street is altered at this scale, it cannot be restored. We owe it to ourselves - and to future generations - to ensure development respects our heritage and strengthens our community, rather than diminishes it. Residents are not totally against development and urge the developer to limit the building height to three storeys. The local committee noted that King's Official Plan was recently updated. In that process, it was determined that the zoning would permit a 3-storey residential development in this location, significantly increasing the density, and welcoming new people to Schomberg. However, doubling the permitted height from 3 to 6 storeys is unacceptable. Here is the link to the petition: <https://c.org/VdPk8mSfvP> The application appeared before council in June of 2025, which drew a packed council chamber of opposing residents. Numerous delegations and councillor opposition almost killed the plan, but councillors opted to refer the matter back to staff. Going against the staff recommendations for approval, council had hoped at the time that staff and the developer could work together to come to a solution everyone can live with. The proposal has undergone several revisions, since an initial public meeting back in 2022. The current proposal has grown in size and lot coverage. Opposition from residents included concerns about the site's proximity to the Dufferin Marsh; the construction impact on local businesses; tree removal and traffic. The height is the main concern, as residents noted it will be a towering building right in the historic core, something that doesn't fit in at all. One resident called it "the worst plan yet" from the developer. At the 2025 meeting, Councillor Mary Asselstine was another opponent, pointing to the building's height, lack of parking, increase in traffic as major impacts. The building, perched on the hill, will definitely "hurt the streetscape." Councillor Jennifer Anstey joined her colleague in opposition, noting the building may well meet planning standards, but it "does not meet the standards of the community." She said should the matter go to the Ontario Land Tribunal, she's "okay with that. Some things are worth fighting for." Typically, when council goes against planning recommendations, an appeal to the OLT is often the route taken by proponents. While councillors prefer to avoid a trip to the OLT given the costs, there are times when council has to stand firm with residents. The project, as presented last year, is a "recipe for disaster," said Mayor Steve Pellegrini. He also hoped for collaboration with the developer and a scaled-down version as a result. While intensification of the Village Core Area is supported by the Official Plan, it must demonstrate compatibility with the small-scale village character. The Official Plan includes provisions for building heights that permit up to 6-storeys provided that certain compatibility criteria are met including visual and shadowing impacts, building tiering, angular plane, step backs and buffering. Furthermore, developments are not to exceed a floor space index of 2.5 to ensure that density and scale remain suitable for the Village Core.