

Madam Mayor, Councilors, City staff and citizens of Burlington.

My name is Kirk Robinson and I am a director of Millcroft Against Development, a non-profit organization formed to oppose Millcroft Greens' application to introduce residential development to the existing Millcroft golf course.

With 4,000 petitions signed and over 1,000 lawn signs installed throughout the neighbourhood, our membership shows how strong and passionate the opposition is.

As you can see, we have over 500 letters opposing the application. And our opposition is for good reason.

Millcroft Greens' application is poorly considered, full of fallacies, and in no one's best interests but the developer's.

The developer cites two primary reasons for bringing forth this application – first, that it will improve safety for neighbouring landowners, and second, that the shortened course will be more financially viable.

Both of these justifications are bogus. On the safety issue, a shortened course will attract more novice golfers, decreasing safety. The new design has golf carts on sidewalks, where they could be struck by homeowners pulling out of driveways.

There are other ways to improve safety, such as offering safety nets to neighbouring homeowners or planting more trees. These avenues have not been explored and won't be explored because Ed Liptay never wanted to be a golf course owner. He is a land developer.

Millcroft Greens' states that the shortened course will make the golf course financially viable. Every expert, golf industry professional, and avid golfer says the opposite.

Especially in the era of COVID, people want to be outside. People want activities they can engage in safely. Golf is bigger now than ever, but the demand for executive courses in this region is low.

It's abundantly clear that Millcroft Greens' is building a shortened course that is designed for failure to justify the second phase of this development application, which would see houses on the remainder of the course.

If Millcroft Greens wanted to run a profitable golf course, it would make no changes to the existing layout (which was designed by a renowned golf course architect, rather than a residential developer) but would have pride of ownership, properly maintain the lands, and engage in activities to increase revenue like it used to do.

When we moved into the neighbourhood, the golf course had a youth program, hosted events for the community, and set itself up for success and profitability.

It's no mistake that Millcroft Greens hasn't included a business plan to show how the shortened course will be financially viable because it won't be.

The current owners make no effort now to be profitable and won't with a shortened course either.

They are positioning themselves for failure to justify developing all 18 holes into housing.

The maintenance shed is a perfect example.

How can you claim the purpose of this development centers on a re-design of a golf course when you haven't even figured out where to put the maintenance shed, which is integral to its operation?

The maintenance shed is not currently near housing, as it holds hazardous substances.

How can its relocation not be critical to community safety? How can it be an afterthought in the application?

Because the application isn't about creating a successful executive course – it's about inevitably developing all 18 holes into housing, thereby leaving Millcroft with less greenspace than any other

community in Burlington and taking it from a desirable, highly sought-after community to a concrete block of gloom.

In truth, we shouldn't even be here having this meeting. The whole world is on pause in a global pandemic, where true, meaningful public consultation is unachievable.

MAD has several members say that they could not participate due to technology limitations.

Millcroft is full of original owners who purchased in the late 1980s. Many of these people are not tech-savvy. They don't know how to e-mail or fill out a web-form to delegate. They don't know how to use zoom.

In a recent statement on these types of decisions, Halton Hills councillor Jane Fogal stated "We need time to inform the public and engage them in critically important discussions, and you can't do that on a Zoom call." She's right.

We're deliberating an application that will impact every resident of this community in a drastic, tangible way, but without allowing every resident to be privy to information and opportunity for engagement.

We know the planning staff are likely overloaded and COVID hasn't made it any easier.

What we want to ensure is that this application is given proper, well-informed consideration. 120 days may not be enough.

Provincial legislation creates this arbitrary and often unachievable deadline for reviewing applications, without consideration for the scope of the application or the timelines of the outside parties from whom the City requires comment.

We want a decision on its merits, with due regard to the Official Plan and to the studies of interested parties, such as conservation authorities.

We urge you to give weight to these third party studies, as well as the residents who so strongly oppose this application for all the reasons they've stated and will state today. We also ask the developer, in fairness, to allow the City the time it requires to render a decision based on a full picture. Thank you.