



# Elect ALAR SOEVER

## For Mayor

### The Town of The Blue Mountains

## Managing Change - How we can better manage development?

Our Town is experiencing unprecedented growth. Currently we have 66 development projects, 4,828 units, at various stages in the development process. Last year the Town of The Blue Mountains issued building permits with a total value of \$185 M, which included 353 new dwellings. This rapid growth is forever changing the face of our Town and its social fabric.

Many long-time residents feel they are being pushed aside, and that they have been ignored and abandoned by Council. Similarly, recent arrivals who moved here to enjoy a peaceful lifestyle in an all seasons community, are finding the unique character of the place they have just moved to under threat.

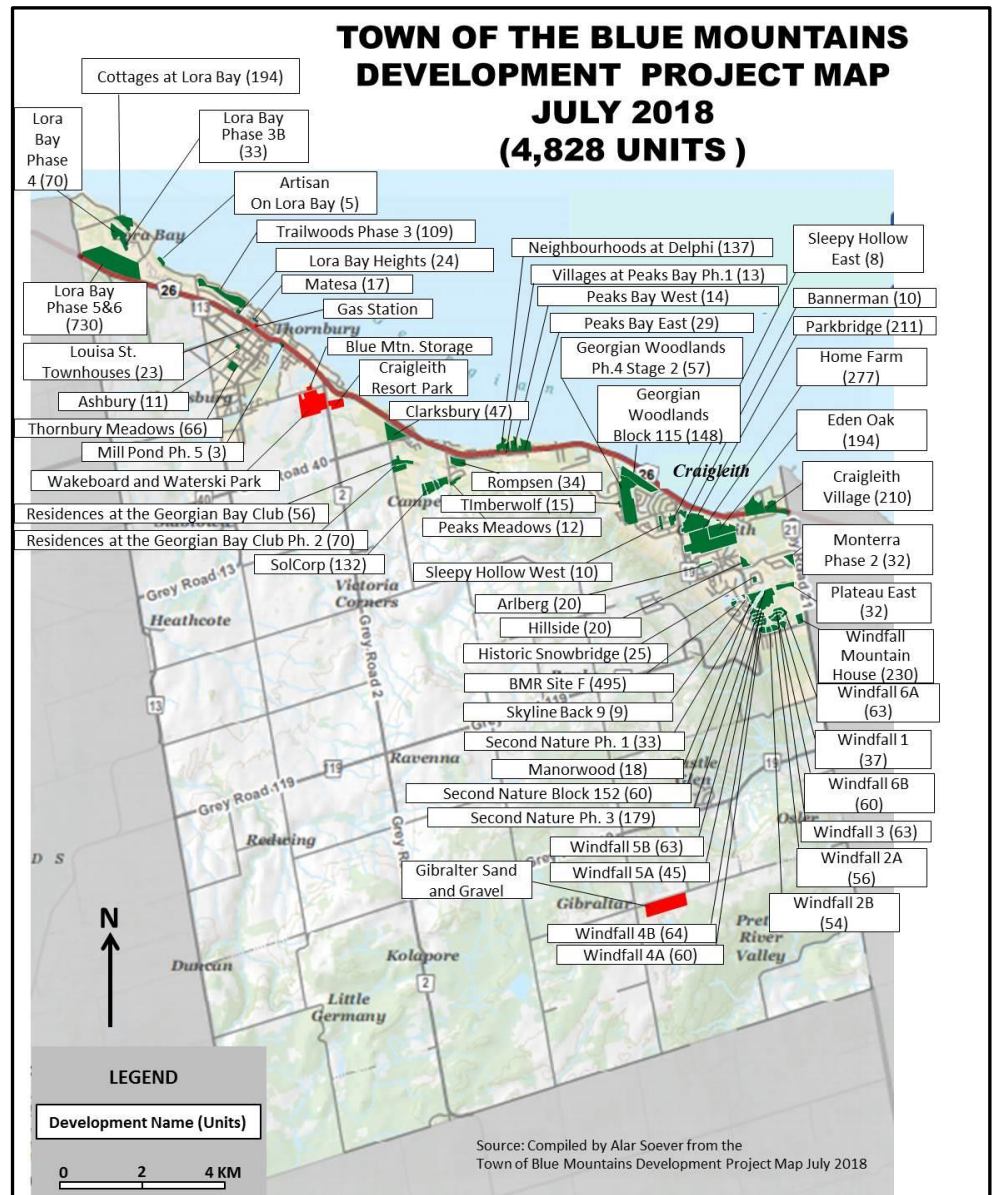
Growth is inevitable, but it must be managed properly, so that we shape our community into what we, and not others, want it to be.

We must clearly convey our vision for our community to developers, businesses, and residents who want to move here, so they have realistic expectations of what they will be able to build and operate here.

If their proposals will add value to our community, we should work with them so that both they and our Town can thrive and prosper. If they do not, we should tell them to go elsewhere.

So how do we do this? Quite simply - we involve the community and Council earlier in the development process. By addressing issues earlier, before a developer has spent a lot of money on site plans and engineering studies, we are far more likely to get the changes we want to development proposals. Once a proposal is well advanced and dollars have been spent, a developer is far less likely to want to make changes that will result in delays and in having to redo work that has already been completed and paid for.

The solution is to provide community and Council input early. (continued on next page)



## WE CAN MANAGE DEVELOPMENT BETTER



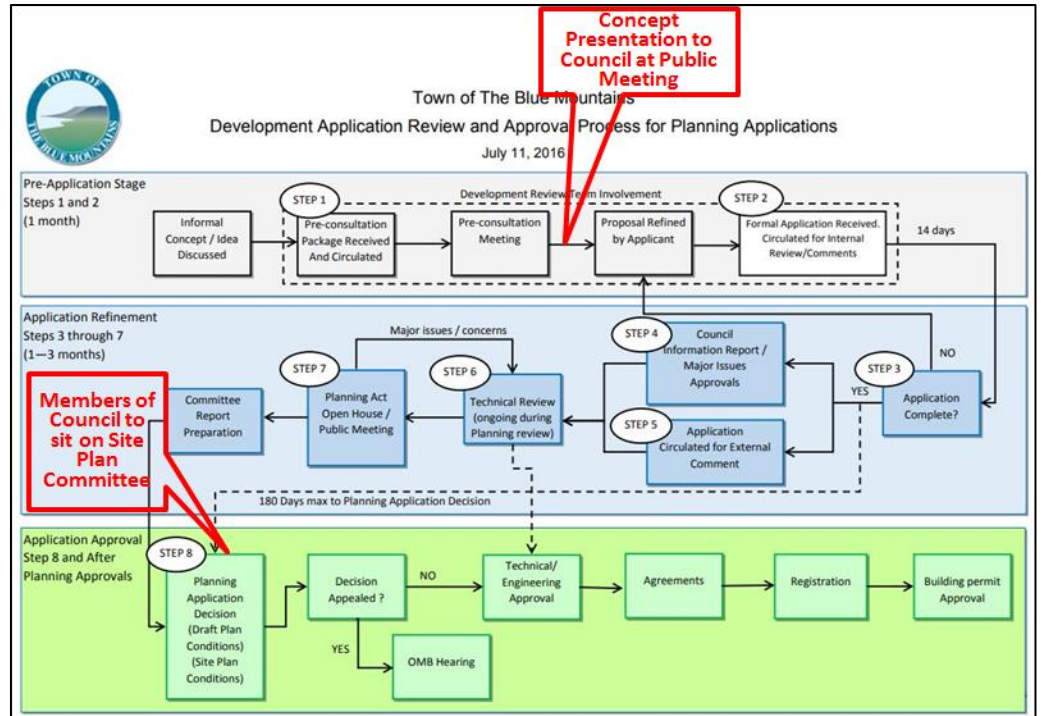
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## How we can better manage development? (continued)

In our current development process the public becomes aware of a proposal only after the application is complete and a Council Information Report has been issued. At this point the developer has spent considerable time and money on reports and engineering. I would propose that we have developers present their proposals to the community earlier at the concept stage, after they have had their pre-consultation meeting with staff, so that they can consider public and Council input when they are refining their proposal.

Further along in the planning process, I am proposing that members of Council sit on the Site Plan Committee. Site Plan Control is a planning tool used to ensure that the development principles as set out in our Official Plan and Zoning By-law are properly addressed at the site planning stage. Many of the specific issues addressed in the site plan conditions have significant impacts on the character and impact of the development on our community. Council needs to be more involved. In Newmarket, the Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) is comprised of all Members of Newmarket Council. By addressing issues early and with more Council direction, we can be more effective in managing development.



## Attainable Housing - After years of inaction, WE MUST ACT NOW!

With the average sale price of a single family home at about \$780,000, the lack of attainable housing has reached crisis proportions in our community. Young families and workers can no longer afford to live here. It is a sad state of affairs when people who were born and raised here cannot afford to buy a home and live here. Without young families and workers, we will cease to have a functioning community. Almost every business is having trouble finding staff. This point was driven home when a local restaurant posted the notice you see here.

Due to being under staffed we will no longer be open for dinner after October 20<sup>th</sup>. We will be re opening for dinner until 8pm on Thursday, Friday, Saturdays Starting June 1<sup>st</sup>.

The attainable housing crisis is touching every part of our community. When I was at the dentist last week, the dental hygienist told me that they had bought in Collingwood because they couldn't find anything at their price point in our Town. How long will it be before we can't find staff for our medical professionals, our pharmacy, teachers for our school, and personal care workers to assist our elderly?

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COUNCIL NEEDS TO BE MORE INVOLVED IN MANAGING DEVELOPMENT



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For years we have done next to nothing. It's true that in January 2014 the Town established a not-for-profit Corporation, The Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corporation (TBMAHC), to augment the supply of attainable ownership housing units in The Blue Mountains. In four years it has done very little due to a lack of direction from Council. It has, I believe, only provided only two grants for accessory suites and three interest free loans to assist with down payments. I am told that one of the homes for which down payment assistance was provided, is being flipped at a higher unattainable price.



Meanwhile, there is unused housing stock in our community, which is sitting vacant. Pictured here are two houses which have remained vacant for the last 8 to 10 years. On the left is Eden Oaks model house, waiting unused for years for this development to proceed, while on the right is a private residence in Thornbury. We have all seen other boarded up buildings which sit empty for

years. We need the TBMAHC to actively seek out and lease such housing stock before it becomes uninhabitable, and get into the business of renting it out to people who are seeking attainable accommodation. Such an approach is likely to only fill part of the demand, but it's a start, and properly managed could create revenue for the TBMAHC to use for other projects.

We need to partner up with other levels of government and stakeholder groups and immediately revitalize the TBMAHC into a Whistler style housing authority. Whistler started to address attainable housing in 1983, and in 1997 established the Whistler Housing Authority (WHA) a not-for-profit housing authority. The WHA succeeded in creating over 2,300 beds (778 units) in 6 years and now has a resident restricted housing stock of 2,034 housing units (946 rental units and 1,087 resident owned units, 6500 beds). When Andrew Siegwart of the Blue Mountain Village Association addressed Council on workforce and housing issues, he was told by the Mayor that staff was busy on other things.

More recently the South Georgian Bay Tourism Labour Supply Task Force presented a report titled South Georgian Bay Tourism Industry Workforce Housing Research Business Case .

## **Attainable Blue - Ideas for Action on Attainable Housing**

The South Georgian Bay Tourism Labour Supply Task Force has, yet again, told us that affordable housing for Blue Mountains workers is desperately needed. It is time to stop talking about this and to get on with doing something! That is why Rob Sampson and I have formulated ideas on an **Attainable Blue Action Plan**. If elected we look forward to working with the community and Council to revitalize the TBM Attainable Housing Corporation to act on these ideas to make this plan a reality.

Our plan builds on the ideas in the Task Force Report and the successes in other resort-based communities like Whistler.

The **Attainable Blue Action Plan** includes revitalizing the TBM Attainable Housing Corporation into a Whistler-style housing authority and the setting of measurable and achievable targets for new housing in three critical categories of need – rental, first time home owners and seniors. This will not be an easy task but our plan is designed for success.

The Task Force Report states: ***"The Housing Authority offers the greatest potential to produce a steady stream of housing. However, it also requires significant start up resources in terms of working equity, financing, and land. It also requires significant human resources and political commitment."***

I urge you to elect a new Council who has that commitment. We are calling on all stakeholders to participate actively in implementing the plan including the tourism business community, who will be asked to provide some of the funding and a guarantee of rental occupancy, as well as developers who, as employers, will be asked to contribute as well.

The TBM Attainable Housing Corporation/TBM will be asked to provide land and zoning density approvals, and local builders will be asked to come forward with suitable design and build services.

The details of our plan, and the full Task Force Report are available for download under Campaign News on my website <https://alarsoever.ca/campaign-news>.

## **WE NEED TO ACT ON ATTAINABLE HOUSING NOW**



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## A Final Word Before You Vote

This has been the third of my monthly inserts in the Review. In them, I have tried to express to you who I am, why I am running and, how I intend to address some of the many issues that face our community.

These issues deserve serious, thoughtful attention and need to be addressed by an engaged community and a new Council working collaboratively together.

We need less expensive reports by consultants and outside experts, many of which do not deliver value for money, and more practical community-based, common sense solutions.

More importantly we need a Council that can take our vision for our community, create policies to realize that vision, and provide clear direction to staff so they can confidently do their job in implementing those policies.

I am not a politician. I am running for Mayor because I didn't want to wake up one morning not liking the place I have always thought of as my home.

With my technical and financial background, and what I have learned working with people all over the world, I believe I can contribute to addressing some of the issues facing our community.

I hope you will give me your vote in October. I do not have all the answers, but I am willing to work hard with you, Council and Staff to address the problems facing our Town.

To date this has been an extremely dirty campaign with the threats of lawsuits, the use of internet trolls, signs being stolen and destroyed, and candidates spreading false rumours about each other, and one even claiming a monopoly on integrity.

Some have tried to drive a wedge into our community by portraying this as a battle between long term and new residents. It is not. We are a community of communities and we all live here together. It is the responsibility of the Mayor and Council to treat everyone fairly and with respect, bring people together, and to build a sense of community where all are welcome.

Moving our Town forward in a positive direction will have to be a team effort, so when you consider your vote for Deputy Mayor and Council, please carefully consider who has demonstrated character and the ability to work together.

**Thank you, and please continue to follow my campaign on my website [alarsoever.ca](http://alarsoever.ca), on Facebook [@alarformayor](https://www.facebook.com/alarformayor) or on Twitter [@AlarSoever](https://twitter.com/AlarSoever)**

WHATEVER YOU DECIDE - PLEASE DO VOTE SO WE HAVE THE STRONGEST COUNCIL EVER