



Scugog Lake Stewards Inc.

**Scugog Lake Steward Inc. Deputation to the Planning and Community Affairs Committee,
Township of Scugog, September 16, 2024**

**Avenu Properties request to Council to seek Minister's approval to enact an MZO on their lands
on the south side of Castle Harbour Drive**

By, Rob Messervey, President, Scugog Lake Stewards

Thank you for having given me the opportunity to make a deputation to you at Council on June 24 on this matter. Given I am out of country at present, I am pleased to have John Brown, a Director of the Scugog Lake Stewards and resident of Canterbury Commons make this further deputation on behalf of the Stewards.

Especially over the last decade, our community has observed a serious deterioration of lake water quality due to climate warming and changing water levels, shoreline erosion, polluted stormwater runoff and destructive invasive species—all of which can be exacerbated by development decisions and further threaten Lake Scugog. Now, this looming, large (600 unit) development proposal could make things worse by interfering in a significant wetland and putting a large, privately operated, communal sewage treatment system and stormwater management facility on the shores of Lake Scugog and Cawkers Creek, which are vulnerable to any additional environmental impacts.

The developer, Avenu Properties, has asked the Township of Scugog Council to request a provincial Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) to speed up the zoning and unit density for the project. However, we seriously question whether saving time is a good enough reason to remove municipal oversight and control over this development.

If the MZO was approved, the zoning, density, form, and spacing of the development would be essentially set in stone in Regulation made under the Planning Act:

- *Before* updated ecological assessments to determine appropriate Environmental Protection and Hazard Land Zone boundaries and setbacks are completed.
- *Before* a major private communal wastewater treatment facility is designed and deemed functional and appropriate for the site and site conditions
- *Before* the carrying or assimilative capacity of the site is determined.
- *Before* the routing of water services and a second access road to the development (currently projected to cross the wetland) are designed in an environmentally acceptable way.
- *With* only the Minister responsible for determining what studies may be required and what if any consultation is needed to establish site design. To make matters more concerning, there is no appeal mechanism.

Asking for an MZO without this information in hand is putting the cart before the horse, and it could spell bad news for Lake Scugog. We have seen recent development failures lead to massive silt and sediment spills into Lake Scugog, despite assurances from builders that it would never happen, touting their technology and oversight. The risks with this development are similar, if not greater, given the site's unique ecology. There could be major threats to the wetland and the abutting creek resulting from sedimentation, contamination, and construction overall, not to mention possible future failures of the proposed water and wastewater services.

The Scugog Lake Stewards Board is supportive of development in the Township of Scugog and we understand the pressure to provide housing and particularly affordable housing. We would welcome it if the project was adequately studied and shown to not have short- or long-term impacts on the shoreline environment or the lake prior to zoning and densities being prescribed. At this point, there are no assurances that this is an acceptable location with acceptable site conditions to meet this 600 unit housing target and meet those safe impact thresholds. Much more study is needed. This development should not be rushed, and not placed in the hands of the province. We question the need for provincial intervention.

We ask Committee and Council to say "no" to Avenu's draft Resolution and request for an MZO. The health of Lake Scugog is so obviously vital to the health of our community. Our best chance to protect the lake is to have the Township retain full authority and control of the development process.

Accordingly, we urge Committee and Council to recommend to Avenu Properties to instead file the proper Official Plan Amendment applications with the Region of Durham and the Township, to enable the normal planning process to begin.

THANK YOU.