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Hastings Drive decision headed to OMB hearing

News Aug 20, 2016 by [Victoria Gray](http://yorkregion-author/victoria-gray/E4D2BF5A-67A5-44F4-9817-D41A7797CF17/) (<mailto:vgray@metroland.com>) Norfolk News

Hastings Drive cottage owners will continue to fight over development and environmental stewardship at the Ontario Municipal Board.

A decision made by Norfolk County council to allow trailers on vacant lots on Hastings Drive in Long Point, where cottages stood before a storm destroyed them in the 1980s, could be overturned by the OMB.

County clerk Andy Grozelle said five appeals were made to the OMB, including one by the provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

"(The ministry) is appealing on five points where the county's decision doesn't adhere to the provincial policy statement," Grozelle said.

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Council decided to allow trailers on the lots in July following years of research, public hearings and deputations on the hazards and appropriate uses of Hastings Drive, as well as protection of endangered species.

Council's decision went against staff recommendations and the advice of a consultant hired to look into the issue.

Both suggested leaving the area designated hazard land and not allowing any construction, camping or trailers.

"In cases like this, we often see planning staff become witnesses against a municipality," Grozelle said.

He added that it may take a year or more for the OMB to schedule a hearing. In the meantime, the current bylaw allowing trailers will remain in effect.

Property owners on Hastings Drive have debated the hazard land designation since the storm that destroyed many of the cottages on the road.

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Those who own vacant lots demand the ability to build, while those with cottages still intact, such as resident Leslie Andrew, are fighting for the environment and the animals that inhabit the area.

Andrew has been an advocate of keeping Hastings Drive designated a hazard land to protect many at-risk species that live there, such as the monarch butterfly, turtles and other wildlife.

"When we bought the cottage, we did so knowing the dangers that came with it and knowing we couldn't build any more and knowing there was a UNESCO World Biosphere (Reserve) behind us," she said.

Andrew helps a neighbour collect monarch caterpillars and fought the county to stop clear cutting ditches to preserve their habitat. She also always keeps a shovel in her trunk to help turtles cross the road.

"There's nothing for me to gain through this. I'm just trying to protect an area that needs to be protected," she said.

by [Victoria Gray](http://yorkregion-author/Victoria-Gray/e4d2bf5a-67a5-44f4-9817-d41a7797cf17/) (<mailto:vgray@metroland.com>)

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