

**Region puts up more money**

# Slokker land deal in Nobleton close to reality

**By Bill Rea**

It's taken almost three years, but it looks like the deal to purchase some 170 Nobleton area acres from Slokker Canada is very close to being finalized.

York Regional council Thursday authorized the contribution of \$1 million toward the acquisition of the property; an increase from its initial pledge of \$750,000, which was approved in 2004. The contribution is contingent upon the Region managing a

95-acres tableland of the overall property as part of the York Regional Forest.

This site is part of Slokker's holdings in the village. Slokker is proposing a 698-unit subdivision on the rest of its lands in the northeast quadrant of Nobleton. That plan received the blessing of the Ontario Municipal Board in February.

"We have the money to buy the land, and they're right now finalizing the deal," Mayor Margaret

Black declared the following day.

She added this is a demonstration of the Region's commitment to environmental protection.

"Restoring the site to its original state will help to maintain an enduring natural legacy for both Nobleton and King Township," she observed.

"It was a huge job to get the whole amount," Black commented. "We ran into several roadblocks."

She said she had started talking with Regional Chair Bill Fisch in December about the possibility of getting more money out of York. It was confirmed in the spring that \$1 million would be coming from the City of Toronto, and Black said that helped clinch the additional contribution from

the Region, as well as pressing home the fact that no one wanted to see this opportunity get passed up.

"I got a call from the mayor's office, saying the Region has increased the donation," commented Slokker president Bruce Kerr Monday. "The city of Toronto is in, and I'm in."

"It's for the right reason," he added. "This endeavour's been a long time coming, but it sounds like everyone's at the table."

There is talk having the deal closed sometime next month, Kerr said.

"From everything I hear, it's absolutely a go," he declared. "We're thrilled to be a catalyst and a participant."

"Acquiring the Slokker property through our Greening Securement

Strategy is a great opportunity for York Region to rehabilitate and protect environmentally-significant land on the Oak Ridges Moraine," Fisch commented. "I am very pleased that together with our partners, we have combined our resources to secure this property and enhance York Region's Greening legacy."

The purchase was arranged by the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust (ORMLT) and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) in 2003, contingent upon their ability to raise \$2.85 million for the sale, stewardship of the property and associated costs of the transaction.

York originally authorized \$750,000 for the purchase, but increased its commitment to \$1 million when some anticipated funding did not come through. The funding partnership also includes the City of Toronto; Slokker, which reduced the price by \$760,000; King Township (\$25,000); the Foundation of Greater Toronto (\$37,000); ORMLT (\$25,000) and private donations amounting to about \$3,000.

"The acquisition of such an important property on the Oak Ridges Moraine has been identified as a very

high priority for York Region," said Regional Councillor Bill O'Donnell of Markham, chair of the transportation and works committee of regional council. "With the success of this purchase, this key aspect of our natural heritage will be protected for benefit of our generation and generations to come."

TRCA will assume ownership of the property, ensuring its protection from development.

The Region will aid in the rehabilitation of the property to help restore it to its natural state.

"A great deal of time and effort went into securing the necessary funds," Black commented. "In particular, as a member of the fund-raising committee, I would like to thank Don Prince for spearheading this initiative. Thanks must also be extended to Toronto Region Conservation Authority staff Brian Denney, Jim Diliane, Ron Dewell, Mike Fenning; Toronto Councillor Glenn De Baermaeker; York Regional Chair Bill Fisch; Regional CAO Mike Garrett, staff members Brian Tuckey, Ian Buchanan and Sandra Malcie; Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust officials Andre Flys, Frank Shaw and Bill Salmon for their work over the past few years."

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**NOTICE OF PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE NO. 2**

The Regional Municipality of York is conducting a study to develop a Regional Pedestrian & Cycling Master Plan. This study is investigating how York Region can work with local municipalities to connect local pedestrian and cycling systems into a regional-scale network, improve connections to transit nodes and encourage the combining of walking and cycling trips with public transit. Scheduled to be completed in the spring, this study will result in a Master Plan that will consist of proposed pedestrian and cycling policies and guidelines, recommendations to improve the pedestrian sidewalk system on regional roads and a recommended regional cycling network. This network is expected to consist of on-road bike lanes, paved shoulder bikeways, signed-only routes and off-road, multi-use trails.

The study was initiated in April and the first public consultation meeting was conducted at two locations in the Region on May 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. The first meeting provided interested parties with the opportunity to review the draft goals and objectives of the study and to identify ideas that could improve conditions for walking and cycling in York Region.

**The study is now entering its second phase** which will focus on the development of an improved sidewalk network on regional roads and a formal regional cycling network. The study team has assembled information from a number of sources using route selection criteria developed in the first phase of the study, and has prepared a preliminary candidate route map to guide the field investigation of potential routes in October and November.

**You are invited to attend our second Open House** to receive an update on the status of this study and to provide your comments on the candidate route map and other information prepared as part of this study. The meeting will be held at two locations from **5:00 to 8:00 p.m.** as follows:

**Monday, October 2, 2006**

**Regional Administration Centre  
17250 Yonge, Newmarket  
Seminar Room**

**Wednesday, October 4, 2006**

**Regional South Services Centre  
50 High Tech Road,  
Richmond Hill**

York Region will also consult with local municipalities, conservation authorities, and other stakeholders. Except for personal information, all comments received will be on public record.

Should you have any questions or comments, you may contact the following project representatives:

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**Food bank will operate Saturday**

The King Township Food Bank will be open for business this Saturday (Sept. 30) from 9 until 11 a.m.

Depots will be running out of St. Mary Magdalene's Anglican Church in Schomberg, St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Nobleton and All Saints' Anglican Church in King City.

Anyone in the community in need of food assistance is welcome to attend.

For more information about the food bank, phone (905) 939-2314.

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