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(by Don Crosby)

Markdale has a 55-home housing development project on the horizon.

Stonetree Development Corporation spokesperson Paul Bonwick announced the site of the new location accompanied by members of Grey Highlands council on March 8. A photograph of Mr. Bonwick and council ran on the back page of last week's Advance.

The subdivision would be just off Margaret Elizabeth Avenue, only two blocks from Markdale's downtown.

"This development represents an exciting new chapter for Markdale in terms of providing much needed new housing to support growth in our community," said Mayor Paul McQueen.

"As a council, economic development is our number one priority. We have actively promoted an 'open for business' environment, and as a result Stonetree Development has answered our call," the mayor added.

Bonwick said the proposed residential development represents an economic impact for the region of more than \$13 million and will provide an additional \$200,000 in municipal and county tax revenue. But more importantly it will provide new housing for people across the province wanting to call Markdale home, said Bonwick.

The developers have now filed their draft plan application to the municipality and Grey County with an anticipated approval in early May.

Bonwick said the new homes will provide the perfect place for families to raise their children close to work and school, as well as the many other activities in the Markdale area.

# New housing development proposed for Markdale

The Advance

Flesherton, Markdale  
Municipality of Grey Highlands

"It's also ideal for retirees, providing a short walk to the downtown core and nearby golf and curling club," he said.

Realizing that the fate of Beavercrest is still undecided, on March 9, Bonwick spoke at the special Bluewater District School Board meeting on the ARC process involving the proposed closure of Beavercrest Elementary School.

"There can be no confusion on this point, if a family is going to move into our area, having timely access to a school is one of their most significant consideration. It is this reality that guides investment dollar," he told trustees.

"It is with this reality in mind I respectfully ask this elected board of trustees to provide the leadership and direction to your staff to work with the municipality and the private sector, with the objective of developing, a funding solution that will see Beavercrest Community School stay open in Markdale," said Bonwick.

During an interview, he

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said the absence of a school in Markdale would seriously affect future investment by Stonetree Development in Markdale.

Bonwick said several factors were considered in the decision to select Markdale, including the 90,000 square expansion by Chapman's Ice Cream of its production facilities, the promise of a new hospital and plans by Sobey's for a \$12 million supermarket.

"To us that spells growth for the region. The hospital is going to provide jobs, Chapman's is going to provide jobs, there's going to be jobs in the retail sector and, of course, within the development community there are going to be significant jobs. This development alone will require an investment of over \$13 million," said Bonwick.

The project will consist of 55 homes – a combination of detached and townhouses.

"This is the first of several investments we would like to make in the area and we think we are going to have very good luck with this in the very near term," Bonwick said.

The builder will be Devonleigh Homes of Orangeville, a real estate developer and builder.

A fixed price point for the new housing units hasn't been established yet but Bonwick estimates it will be around \$299,000 for the three-bedroom homes with a 1,400 sq. ft. ground floor, an unfinished basement along with a full garage and a second floor. Bonwick described the homes as two-storey or back split design.

He hopes to begin initial installation of the water, sewer and other hard services later this year and have the project sold out in the first two years.

The next step is a detailed design and draft plan to the county and Grey Highlands. Once the draft plan is approved, the next step is site plan and a subdivision agreement.

"We want people moving in for sure in 2018 in an ideal world, late fall of 2017... based on the 55 units I think we will sell it out very quickly," said Bonwick. "The housing you typically build them in blocks 10 or 12 houses, but the servicing, roads and street lights will go in all at once."

Bonwick said he's talked with local real estate agents and is aware of the trends in the market, with people selling their homes in the GTA and moving north, as well as farm families within a 40 kilometres radius wanting to retire into town.

"They don't want to necessarily go to Owen Sound or Collingwood, they want to stay close by and we think there is a great opportunity for them here," said Bonwick.

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