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Loon Call Grey Highlands subdivision site aerial photo from a recent Grey County council planning report. **SCREENSHOT**

# Huge 'attainable' housing project planned for Markdale

SCOTT DUNN

A 469-lot "attainable" housing subdivision proposed for Markdale cleared a hurdle at Grey County council on Dec. 8 and discussion revealed one developer's approach to try to keep prices down.

Council endorsed an official plan amendment recommended by planning staff which brings a roughly 5.3-hectare strip of "rural" designated land just north of Markdale within its primary settlement area.

The Loon Call Grey Highlands project is being developed by the

same people doing a similar type of project in Meaford, council learned.

The proposed plan calls for 313 detached residential lots and 156 multi-attached units in Markdale. It will be on 33.42 hectares, including a half-hectare portion owned by the municipality, by its stormwater management pond. That land is to be conveyed to the developer. The development will be serviced by municipal water and sewers. A plan of subdivision application will be considered next.

The project proposal prompted questions from some county councillors.

Southgate Deputy-mayor Barbara Dobreen wondered how the developer was able to deliver more attainable housing, and how will it be priced attainably and not flipped for profit. "I'll look forward to that magic answer," she said.

County planner Scott Taylor said his office has had extensive discussions with the developer, starting with its similar subdivision in Meaford.

He said the units, at least in Meaford "don't just get sold to the highest bidder, they have an extensive vetting process."

Taylor said the Meaford Loon

Call subdivision developer understands people buying their first home or a starter home deserve to build equity but they don't want people just buying and flipping.

"And so at least in the Meaford example, they've even given discounts to locals that are living and working in this area in hopes that they'll see more of these people moving in and possibly raising families in these homes and not necessarily buying as an investment and flipping."

How the attainability pricing is tracked and managed and balanced with rights to build equity in homes remains to be seen, Taylor said.

It's Meaford project is a 201-unit development on the western fringe of town, along Highway 26.

Taylor said the developer has been "very candid with us" in saying the ability to sell at attainable

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prices "hinges very heavily on an expeditious approvals process ... because the longer they hold the property and carry mortgages on the property," the higher prices will be.

Meaford's Deputy-mayor Shirley Keaveney said that developer has been "wonderful to work with in Meaford."

Initially townhomes of 1,100 square feet with unfinished basement and single-car garage were to be sold for \$299,000.

There was no definition provided on Dec. 8 of what would be attainable for the Markdale project.

That was a couple years ago and since then Meaford prices have risen to "over \$300,000" but she didn't know the exact price now. The developer has said "you cannot come in and buy six units," she said, which is to ward off speculation.

She said she asked the developer how he could build for \$299,000 and was told about efficiencies such as one electrician coming in to wire three homes that are exactly the same in one day.

"The plans are the same, no matter whether he's in here or whether he's in Markdale, and his crew just know how to do it quickly and efficiently and without waste and so on," Keaveney said.

"We are, again, really excited about this project coming to Meaford. It's really going to meet a need for us and I'm sure it will in Markdale as well."

The Meaford Loon Call project had been proposed to be 249 units, but that was cut back after developer consultations with neighbouring property owners and others. Lots were adjusted, a children's parkette and other green space was added.

In Markdale, development interest has been high and there's one other 400-unit development at the south end of town behind Foodland that's ready to start building next year. It's mostly single detached homes at market rates.

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Thanks  
Fred &  
Gail