

Full house gathers to consider future of Talisman lands

(by M.T. Fernandes, Local Journalism Initiative)

A full house at the Flesherton Kinplex on Dec. 10 saw participants speaking, drawing and working together on what future use of the Talisman properties would be most beneficial to the area.

These are all privately-held: the top and the bottom of the slope by Beaver Valley Development Group, and the main Talisman Inn property by a partnership with Brian Ellis and Phil Calvano.

The workshop was led by a consultant hired by the Escarpment Corridor Alliance (a registered charity) in co-operation with the Protecting Talisman Lands Association. The firm is Public City Architects and Landscape Architects.

“The strong consensus that came out from 130 people was that a new, well-done hotel complex that is designed around the use of the lands for recreation” would be beneficial,” the Alliance chair Stephen Griggs told the Advance in a later telephone interview. He is a Beaver Valley resident.

When complete, the consultation will be presented to Grey Highlands, Grey County, the Niagara Escarpment Commission and also to the public.

As for land at the top and the bottom of the hill, Mr. Griggs in the interview cited obstacles to its use, including existing planning restrictions, topography – the slope and the karst land where water moves unpredictably and need for upgraded services and roads.

“Infrastructure is a very significant issue,” he said, including the condition of Road 7A and potential impact on the source of water for Kimberly-Amik near the brow of the slope.

He described a strong consensus



A full house at the Flesherton Kinplex on Dec. 10 for meeting about Talisman

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among those gathered for “nothing built” on the lands at the top and bottom of the hill.

Notably, while owners of the Talisman Inn property attended, no representatives from the Beaver Valley Development Group, he said.

Paul Mondell, a BVDG representative, spoke at a recent council open forum when plans for the ECA consultation were presented. He said BVDG had its own public consultation, and it included negative interaction from people whom he said were “likely” involved in the new undertaking.

The BVDG consultation had included concept drawings with housing development, open space, and connections to the Bruce Trail.

Some who attended the

BVDG consultation have said that it looked like about 250 units were proposed at the top and bottom. At the time, representatives said they could not provide unit counts until after consultation with the NEC.

The BVDG has said in the past that almost 70 percent of the bottom land was a “no-go” area, which could be used for amenities, the Advance reported at the time. There is also land adjacent to existing housing.

Complementary development of all the parcels of land was still on the table, Mondell said then.

Before the sale to BVDG, that complementary development was also in the sights of Grey Highlands, which hired a company to co-market the privately-held Talisman Inn land (Ellis/Calvano) with the properties that had come in the hands of the municipalities because of debts owed.

In the end, only the

properties at the top and bottom of the slope were sold to Westway Capital, with the project now called Beaver Valley Development Group.

The Escarpment Corridor Alliance now has reached out to the BVDG, but not received a reply, Mr. Grigg said.

He reported that the Dec. 10 meeting in Flesherton had a positive feeling – “a sense of optimism” that someone was doing the work of thinking about the property as a whole.

He said that February or March would be the likely time-frame for the report. It will incorporate research of the extensive documentation on the site, and update environmental work, such as new Grey-Sauble flood plain mapping.

Several councillors attended the meeting, including Nadia Dubyk, Joel Loughead and Paul Allen, he said.