

Background Declaration of Surplus Property  
March 24, 2025  
Communication Vacant Residential Land

Council has received a number of concerns regarding the sale of the property on Collar Hill Road.

For the sake of transparency, on behalf of Council and Staff, I acknowledge that the information below could have been made available within the rise and report segment of the January 13<sup>th</sup>, Committee of the Whole Session.

When the decision was made, it was with review of past endeavors and consideration of how the funds from the sale might best suit the needs of the Community.

The lands were transferred to Village as "Parkland" as part of the subdivision process. The lands are in the RU zone - the same as all of the other ME1 lots. The only restriction is **under the Planning Act and that the proceeds from the sale of the land must be placed in a recreation reserve account** (the same as cash in lieu of parkland).

Previous attempts to reach a consensus on recreational use for the property have been unsuccessful. The current requirements to ensure accessible and inclusive access, along with insurance concerns which increase liability create an issue for municipal recreational development on the property.

The municipalities' core infrastructure needs are far greater than what can be raised through annual taxation.

The capital need for roads, sewer and water are of the utmost concern and we are taking steps to address those in a plan for capital asset replacement.

Unfortunately this leaves very little available for any **capital recreational investment**. Staff has submitted funding applications for a number for recreation projects but with most of those, matching funds are required.

This is one of the reasons why the lot on Collar Hill was deemed surplus and the funds from the sale will be placed in a **specific reserve for Recreation Capital**.

Another reason for declaring the property surplus was that it will be deemed a residential lot and the assessment associated will be added to the tax role, generating additional revenue to our tax base.

Although the lot is 2.97 acres, the decision was made by Council not to sever it into two parcels. Council will be provided any offers of purchase and the decision of the sale of property will rest with Council

Council was of the opinion that single residential use would be less intrusive to the abutting residents than any other form of development on the property.

There is an abundance of open green space within Merrickville Estates 1 and each lot is large enough to accommodate amenities and outdoor spaces which negate the need for a park.

The past two rural subdivisions approved by Council did not include parkland and Council opted to receive "cash-in-lieu of parkland for this very reason."

Darlene Plumley CAO Village of Merrickville-Wolford