

Johnathan

Good morning Mayor Foster and members of the finance and administration committee. My name is Johnathan Schickedanz and I am the general manager of FarSight Homes and the current president of the Durham Region Home Builders' Association.

I am here this morning with great concerns about the proposed recommendation to move forward with the Green Development Standards in the Region of Durham. I was very involved with the review of the Whitby Green Standards and would like to share my concerns with you.

While I understand that the Region is validly concerned about Climate Change, moving forward with programs that would mandate building above the Ontario Building Code and the Planning Act may do more harm than good.

First, it should be noted that the Ontario Building Code is the provincial legislation that builders across the province are mandated to follow. Builders, trades, professionals and building inspectors know and understand the code. The OBC is updated on a regular basis and does include measures to make homes more energy efficient. Sometimes, however, municipalities become frustrated with the amount of time it takes to update the Ontario Building Code, and create programs such as the Whitby Green Standards to hurry things along.

One of the big problems with doing that is that it rushes the entire process. Changes to the Ontario Building Code take time because nowadays houses are built as a system, which means that any change to the home could impact the entire house. There are both provincial and national code committees that vet potential changes, and that vetting process includes ensuring that the changes will improve the build quality and provide a healthy and safe space for homeowners. Skipping this process could lead to unintended consequences for both homeowners and the Town of Whitby who mandated the changes.

It also gives everyone in the building industry, including trades, suppliers, architects and engineers time to learn the new building methods and products and ensure that they have the proficiency needed to construct a new home. The Ontario Building Code provides advance notice of changes to ensure that everyone is on the same page when the changes take effect.

It should be noted that the Ontario Building Officials Association has said that CBOs cannot and will not inspect anything above the Ontario Building Code.

The building industry is already regulated by two levels of government - provincial and federal. There simply isn't the need to add another layer of red tape to the process.

It's also counterintuitive, since the building industry is constantly innovating, and it's members of the building industry that are submitting for and pushing code changes. Even within the Durham Region Home Builders' Association, we have builders that have plans to test building to Net Zero. They do not need the municipality to mandate that they have to,

and in fact, rushing to that level without taking the proper steps could lead to builders that are completely unprepared to build these types of homes.

The Durham Region Home Builders' Association would like to issue an invitation to regional councillors and staff to work with us on a path forward that is greener, more efficient and more resilient. Together, we can create a roadmap that works both for the building industry and helps the Region of Durham achieve its goals.

In the meantime, I would ask that you vote no today on the motion before you in regards to the Green Development Standards in the Region of Durham, and instead vote yes to collaboration with the industry.