

August 2007

**RE: Almonte Sadler Farm Estates
Proposal**



Mississippi Mills
Residents' Association

To Mississippi Mills Council,

Please include this formal submission along with all other written submissions in regards to the Sadler proposal being discussed at the next planning committee meeting – Tuesday, August 28, 2007, at 6PM. Please include this letter in each Councilor's Committee meeting package of documents.

The MMRA wishes to reinforce the following points:

1. Site and Layout

The MMRA believes that this site is indeed suitable for housing development. It is a marginal agricultural area, though there appear to be areas of natural significance that should be addressed (see point 6).

The proposed road layout (grid like) and the connections to existing streets is typical of existing Almonte and we believe an appropriate choice. These modifications to the original plan are based on the developer's previous consultation with the community and this sets an excellent basis for further community consultation.

2. Density

Residents support controlled financially sound growth, however the Sadler proposal amounts to "explosive" growth, which has not been proven as financially viable for the community.

Previously, the Mississippi Mills planning department has proposed and supported a ratio of 6 units/acre as a standard for residential sub-divisions. This is the equivalent to 15 units/hectare. The Sadler subdivision is proposing about 1.8 times this historic yardstick with 26.8 units/hectare. Clearly this increased density has financial and operational constraints that have not yet been quantified or supported in the past.

In addition, this proposed high density development is located at the edge of town. This high density at this location is not supported by the COP, nor is it what residents believe is acceptable.

To achieve a density in keeping with the town character, the MMRA feels that a wider range of housing types needs to be incorporated rather than a high concentration of largely smaller houses (i.e. large and small houses, apartments, mixed spatially and by design – in other words – like Almonte is now)

Questions: How will the communal, recreational and infrastructural impacts on MM, which can be expected by such a concentrated development, be assessed prior to approval of this proposal?

3. Mixed housing types and Affordable Housing

Residents support mixed and affordable housing and to this end the COP sets out a guideline amount of 25%. There seem to be repetitive unsubstantiated statements that there is currently not enough affordable housing in Almonte and MM in general. As these broad brush statements appear to form the back-bone of the proposal submission it is incumbent upon Council and the Planning Department to ensure their accuracy prior to any approvals.

Possibly an existing study exists or an analysis has been undertaken by staff - however we do not believe that residents are aware or fully informed of the current status of mixed and affordable housing in MM and specifically in this case Almonte. Empirically, if one tours Almonte, there appear to be a large number of areas and pockets where smaller houses dominate the landscape in addition to potential vacant lots for new development.

NOTE: According to the MMAH website, affordable housing is < \$181,500/dwelling in Lanark County (see <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4083>)

NOTE: It should be a simple and very useful study to perform using the computerized housing assessment rolls that the town has access to.

Questions: Does the existing affordable housing stock in Almonte equal the COP guideline?

If not, how much additional affordable housing is required to meet the COP guideline?

If required, the next question should be where is the best locations for this requirement and what are the financial gains and associated costs to the town?

4. Traffic patterns around the Sadler proposal

There is little doubt that additional traffic in and around Sadler estates will further congest an already congested bottleneck into and out of Almonte. Therefore, the MMRA recommends a detailed area wide (not just the development) traffic study based on more than one singular snapshot be completed prior to any approval. It must be noted that since the proposed type and density of the housing is more conducive to pedestrian traffic (a good thing!), including bicycles, any traffic study look at vehicle and pedestrian demands. With a number of schools and retail establishments located in the general area the safe crossing of Ottawa Street must be paramount.

Question: Will Council endorse an overall Almonte and area traffic study be completed (including police & fire department and school input) and use this to determine the traffic safety and flow aspects of this proposed development prior to approval?

5. Water and Sewer

The MMRA strongly recommends that no approval be granted until an independent review of all water and sewer proposals has been completed and a decision on a new waste-water treatment is also completed. To approve the proposal first may force Council to move forward with an unnecessary, inappropriate and financially unsatisfactory investment in a new waste-water treatment facility to satisfy this proponent - at the cost of all residents and taxpayers.

Questions: What is the exact overall currently approved building unit total number and more importantly phasing and thus yearly infrastructure requirements? (Spring St, Ann St, Metcalfe, Logan subdivision, White Tail Ridge, etc)?

Will council delay approval of major development proposals (including this one) until final decisions are made and funding is obtained for the waste water treatment and sewage/water infrastructure upgrades?

6. Significant Natural Features

The MMRA finds it disturbing that the developer's report referenced in the July 31st agenda package (pg 47) dismisses out of hand any ecological significance to any part of the site, even though three significant natural features were noted.

Question: Will the town initiate an independent assessment of the developer's report on the significant natural features?

In Summary

The MMRA feels that this proposal has many positive aspects, but is premature in the light of the unknown current state of housing mix in Almonte, the proposed high density, the overall traffic study requirement, the unknowns surrounding Almonte water and sewer, and concerns about natural features.

We would like to see council give serious consideration to answering the questions we and others have proposed (i.e. lets get our ducks lined up) prior to any approval of this major development.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter, and please feel free to contact us to answer any questions you might have about our comments or provide additional information/clarification.

Sincerely,

The MMRA Board of Directors,

Mississippi Mills Residents Association (MMRA)