



June 24,

Chair Goldring, Mayor Jackson and members of the Community and Corporate Services Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about the important Resolution Regarding Ontario Regulation 444/98 (Disposition of Surplus Real Property).

Many of you are likely aware that Burlington and many Ontario communities have experienced devastating losses of neighborhood and community parkland when schools have been closed and the valued green space replaced forever with development. There is significant documentation recognizing the social, economic and environmental benefits of accessible community parkland. It is a key factor in supporting the quality of life many of us are fortunate to enjoy.

Ontario Regulation 444/98 governs the school disposition process and we feel it has several major deficiencies:

- It does not mandate a process that involves discussion between the school board and the community, reducing chances for finding innovative and mutually positive solutions to the selling of closed school properties that benefit both the board and the community and;
- The 90 day process is far too short to adequately support awareness and engage potential stakeholders to explore alternative solutions and;
- The current Regulation forces school property to be sold for “fair market value”, often limiting the ability of municipalities to repurchase the land.....land that in some cases was originally “transferred to the school board from the city in the first place with taxdollars supporting the maintenance needs for many years. Fundamentally, we, as do the many citizens we have heard from, believe it is highly unethical to expect municipalities to have to repurchase lands in essence that have already paid for already.

BurlingtonGreen and other Halton community organizations have contacted the Ministry of Education to request needed changes to the legislation, and to date have been unsuccessful in getting a response. Time is running out for 8 Halton school sites that were declared surplus in January by the HDSB.

As an incremental step in establishing the importance and urgency of this issue with the Ministry, and with the recommendation of our Halton colleagues, we have asked Mayor Jackson to help develop this resolution before you today.

We would like to thank Mayor Jackson for his help in developing this resolution and framing it as a contradiction to the Places to Grow Act.

The proposed resolution has been sent to the Mayors of Oakville and Halton Hills, Milton and three Hamilton Councilors.

We are asking for your support in adopting this resolution. Burlington's leadership on this issue will provide a strong example to the other communities who have received the resolution and for it to be presented at the AMO this summer to get Ontario-wide support.

**What is Environmental Stewardship?** *Environmental Stewardship is the care and enhancement of the land for the benefit of the environment, and of future generations. All of you have the opportunity before you today to be effective stewards by seeking change to this provincial legislation.*

Thank you for listening.