

Action plan update on former General Motors lands

Jan. 30, 2019 – The City of St. Catharines continues to take steps to address the safety and security concerns related to the state of the property commonly referred to as the former General Motor lands on Ontario Street.

While the City has taken steps to prosecute the current landowner over alleged infractions under the Ontario Building Code and Ontario Fire Code, work continues to address concerns regarding the condition of the privately owned property at 282-285 Ontario St. and 10 Pleasant Ave. Since Monday night's meeting, when council approved an action plan, the following activities have taken place:

Environmental concerns

- The City has sent a letter to the provincial Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks in order to file an official complaint regarding the property, requesting remedial action and seeking a meeting with the Minister.
- The City has sent letters to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, Niagara Peninsula Conversation Authority, Niagara Region Public Health Department and local Members of Provincial Parliament requesting a report on how and when conditions of the site are monitored by their respective agencies, and to request water, soil and air-quality tests on lands adjacent to the residential neighbourhoods.

Safety and Security

- Council requested that staff engage a security company on a month-to-month basis to assist in keeping people out of the site to address site security issues.
- City staff are inspecting fencing around the site to address any need for repair.

Cleanup and Redevelopment

- The City is seeking external legal expertise about options to clean up and demolish the privately-owned site and recover costs.
- The City is engaging the Canadian Brownfields Network to share its expertise. (Brownfield properties are vacant or underutilized industrial properties where redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated due to previous land use.)
- Council directed the creation of a political action group about the site. This group is not yet formed and the City is not accepting applications at this time. Staff will report to City Council at a future date on next steps for this group.

Report suspicious activities, crimes to police

Residents can assist by reporting suspicious, dangerous or criminal activity at the site to the Niagara Regional Police. If you witness a crime in progress, such as break and enters, trespassing or graffiti, please call 911.

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Contact:

Mayor Walter Sendzik
905.688.5601 ext. 1540
mayor@stcatharines.ca