

Airport Runway Project Update – March 8 2010

By
Paul MacInnes

There has been a major development in the ongoing tragedy that is Algonquin Highlands' runway expansion project.

As most of you know the Middleton family who are MBC members fought selling their land to the township as they did not want the new runway. They did volunteer to sell the township a parcel of land for hangers and other airport buildings that the township said were needed. This offer was declined.

Almost 3 years ago the township told the Middletons that 100 acres of their land was to be taken away from them by expropriation. The Middletons' lawyer advised them that they would never be able to stop the township from taking their land even though most reasonable people had concluded that the proposed runway was

- Not needed
- Not justified in any business case and
- Not wanted by the overwhelming majority of the people that would have to pay for it.

Given their lawyer's advice they decided they had no choice but to sell the land they loved.

The township proceeded to offer them 64% less per acre for their land than what the township had just paid for a much less desirable parcel of land close to them. The family, with the township's blessing had the land evaluated by one of the County's top real estate firms. The evaluation came back at \$543,500. The township refused to pay.

On the advice of the lawyer, recommended to them by MBC, and one of the top expropriation experts in the province, the Middletons agreed to provisionally sell at the offered price with the final price to be set by the OMB (Ontario Municipal Board)

For the last 2 ½ years this process had been underway. The final deal was reached on Friday. The township ended up paying the Middletons' \$550,000. including a portion for injurious affection – almost the same

value that the Middleton's would have settled for 2 ½ years ago.

Unfortunately for all of us, by the Township taking the route they did - the lawyers, geologist, planners and noise consultants that the Middleton's and Township were forced to hire ran up bills of \$475,000. In addition interest costs assessed onto the township by the OMB added another \$53,000.

Total added and unnecessary costs to the taxpayers of \$527,000.

As you know we have often found that the township used stonewalling and bullying through this whole process. By looking at the OMB documents it seems obvious that the Township tactics displeased the OMB. These tactics resulted in the OMB doubling the interest rate to be paid to the injured parties. Lawyers who are experts in this process tell us that a doubling of the interest rate is very rare and was clearly meant as a penalty message to Algonquin Highlands.

The bottom line =

1. **Over 1 million dollars spent to acquire a property appraised at \$543,000 for a project that is**
 1. **Not needed**
 2. **Not justified by any business case and**
 3. **Not wanted by the overwhelming majority of Algonquin Highlands taxpayers**

After speaking at length to the Middleton's yesterday I can only imagine how hard this multi year process has been on the whole family. It was heart wrenching enough for them to lose this land but for them to then watch these bills continue to pile up, not knowing whether or not they would ever be reimbursed must have been incredibly stressful. And finally they are stressed by all this money that was wasted on lawyers and consultants as a result of the townships tactics.

**The Middleton family has my support.
yours as well.**

I hope they have

If you wish to send a message of support to the Middleton's send a message to me. I will collate and send on to the family.

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