

UPDATE: Algonquins chain themselves to Beaver Pond trees

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A protest at the Beaver Pond ended peacefully on the morning of Feb. 1 after two Algonquin First Nations men were told they'd be charged with trespassing by police.

Daniel Bernard "Amickwabe" and Robert Lovelace had chained themselves to trees in the area where KNL Developments Inc. had started cutting on Monday, Jan. 31.

"We managed to stop the cutting for a few hours," said Lovelace after the two were escorted down by police to a round of applause from supporters around 11:30 a.m.

Bernard and Lovelace began their protest around 7 a.m., Tuesday in the hopes of preventing further destruction.

"You don't have to be an Aboriginal to have common sense. So what's happening behind us, that's not common sense," said Bernard. "That's full out destruction and a full out slap in the face of the Algonquin community."

Scarborough resident Bernard, who set up the sacred fire at the Beaver Pond in January, said he was compelled to come back.

"We're not going to give up. This is an Algonquin First Nations place," he said. "We feel compelled to protect the animals, to protect the trees. Where we were tied up there, Bob and I were looking, there are butternut trees and those are an endangered species and they're going to destroy this. This needs to stop and should be stopped immediately."



Daniel Bernard, in red, and Robert Lovelace, in blue, are escorted off the property by police.



Bernard, left, and Lovelace, want to see the cutting stopped.

KNL URGED TO PAUSE

KNL, a partnership between Urbandale and Richcraft, began clear-cutting the 26 hectares of land north of the Beaver Pond on Monday to make way for a new housing development.

The company had agreed to delay cutting in the area until Jan. 31 to give the Algonquins of Ontario (AOO) time to evaluate the existing archaeological assessment. After the group reviewed the documents, it said there was a high potential for finding Aboriginal artifacts in the area.

The development has faced criticism from Algonquin groups, residents and environmentalists who all have said the land could have archeological significance.

In a memo to council, John Moser, general manager of planning and growth management said he urged KNL to consider another pause in construction.

"I have written to KNL with regard to the AOO request that a further pause be provided. In that letter, I have encouraged KNL to give full and fair consideration to this request and keep the city informed of progress.

"I also confirmed to KNL that the conditions of draft approval require the preservation or removal and documentation of archaeological resources. Thus, in the event that such resources are found on the site, KNL has been reminded of its obligation to ensure that these resources are properly documented and preserved."

However, KNL was given the green light by the city to begin cutting in mid-January. The city sent the developer a letter saying it had met all necessary preconditions for tree removal for Phase 9 of the development.

Bernard said he was disappointed with the government's inaction.

"The government is allowing total violence against Algonquin First Nations. It's the United Nation's Year of the Forest and here in the capital city of Canada they're destroying a jewel."

Police and Urbandale security officers are on-site, directing traffic and keeping people from stopping along Goulbourn Forced Road.

“They are concerned about safety,” said Kanata North Coun. Marianne Wilkinson. “Goulbourn Forced Road is very narrow and they said if necessary, they said they’d close it.”

She added that the pathway along the Beaver Pond itself it open to the public.

“They tried to stop them yesterday (from using it) and I clarified it with KNL. It’s a public path on public land; it’s not part of their land.”

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