

New 'missing link' trail to connect communities of Rockwood, Eden Mills

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BRUCEDALE –

When it comes to a comprehensive trail network throughout Guelph-Eramosa, local officials believe they have found an elusive missing link.

For years the township has tried to develop a trail between Rockwood and Eden Mills, and that path will soon become a reality, thanks to last week's signing of an agreement with private landowners Francis Golightly-Burns and Alan Burns.

Parks and recreation manager Robin Milne explained the 1km L-shaped path will follow the boundary of an agricultural property owned by the residents and will cost about \$14,000 to create.

The trail will run from the intersection of Indian Trail and Wellington Road 44 and travel northeast for about 700m, where it will turn northwest and run for 300m, before meeting Parkinson Drive in Rockwood, near a township pumping station.

The majority of the trail will be located on an existing farm lane and will require minimum maintenance, although 300m of the trail will require "minor grading, removal of dead trees and relocation of field stones," Milne explained.

He added the final 10m of the trail "will require engineered fill to be hauled in and leveled out to allow for safe access to the trail from [Parkinson Drive]."

The trail agreement runs for one year and automatically extends every year thereafter unless terminated by one of the parties.

It states the land will remain owned by Golightly-Burns and Burns, while the construction, care, maintenance, liability and taxes will be the responsibility of the township.

Milne said Golightly-Burns has expressed concern with horses and snowmobiles accessing the trail, so the township will have to look into the most cost effective way to put gates on the trail without hindering the residents' access to the farm land.

Noting the agreement has been in the works for almost three years, councillor Doug Breen said it is good to finally see a signed document.

He added the agreement could be used as a template for other trail agreements on private land.

Councillor David Wolk asked what happens if the Burns' sell the property, and CAO Janice Sheppard said the agreement is not registered on title, so the township would have to address that at the time.

Mayor Chris White said it's possible the municipality could sever the trail and purchase it if the current landowner ever wants to sell the property.

Council unanimously approved the trail agreement, although Milne said the trail will not be opened until the township has had the chance to complete the work required to make it safe for residents' use.