

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST – SEPTEMBER 2021

This past week a group of concerned citizens filed a freedom of information request with the Municipality of Grey Highlands (MGH) on the process related to the conditional sale of 133.8 acres of public lands to Westway Capital on the Talisman site.

The group is filing this request in order to access information about the sale of environmentally significant public lands at the Talisman site, part of the UNESCO-designated Niagara Escarpment biosphere. They believe that the public lands at Talisman provide a rare opportunity to create a sustainable and ecological legacy for future generations. They are concerned that the municipality has not sufficiently involved the public regarding the future of these lands, and that discussion and decision-making has been conducted behind closed doors.

Since January 2021, Council has discussed the Talisman site seven times according to a review of minutes, all in closed session. (Due to the way closed sessions are minuted, it is not always possible to ascertain when the Talisman property was discussed in closed session.) During this period, the municipality decided to dispose of public lands at Talisman, to enter into a joint venture agreement with the current private owners at the site, to hire a private firm to market the lands and most recently, to conditionally sell the public lands to Westway Capital. While the Municipal Act provides for municipalities to discuss matters relating to a specific land sale in private, decisions related to the overall strategic direction for Talisman should be discussed in public, which has not happened.

The MGH has also not followed the spirit of its own policies with respect to the sale of public lands which call for a “transparent and accountable process”. The municipality voted to sell its land to Westway without any public involvement or consultation despite clearly expressed, strong community interest and alternative visions for the site.

For more information about this and other citizen efforts regarding the Talisman site, contact [TalismanLands@gmail.com](mailto:TalismanLands@gmail.com)

Our website: [ProtectTalisman.ca](http://ProtectTalisman.ca)

For further information, call Kate Lazier: 437-887-6554