

Upset homeowners sue city and contractors

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Four Cold Lake homeowners are each suing the City of Cold Lake, Value Master Homes and Cat Landscaping for \$260,000, alleging the condos they bought were built on land with a known potential for soil instability and a resulting slide diminished the market value of the homes.

In a June 18 statement of claim, Don and Elda Thackeray, Janet Dixon, and Barbara Rocchio, Patrick George and Gary Swanson allege they bought townhouses in the Freedom Ridge Condominium Complex located in Cold Lake North.

The homes were built by Value Master Homes following the City of Cold Lake issuing zoning and building permits.

The homeowners claim the city had in its possession a

report that included warnings regarding developments on the Freedom Ridge lands due to potential soil instability and say Value Master Homes knew of the report during construction.

As a result, it is alleged that in 2006, due to an accumulation of moisture on the lands, Cat Landscaping was hired to provide better drainage to the site.

On June 27, 2007, ground movements and extensive cracking allegedly appeared on the lands and an area of approximately 23 metres by nine metres slid towards the edge of Cold Lake.

The homeowners claim the slide was a direct and foreseeable result of the dangers warned or, alternatively, a result of the drainage modification that took place in 2006.

The lawsuit referenced in the above article had absolutely no merit. A [geotechnical report](#) prepared by HBT AGRA Limited in 1993 found the site to be stable and safe to build on. It recommended specific types and specifications for allowable foundations and determined a set back line from the top of bank.

When the condominiums at Freedom Ridge were built by Value Master Homes in 2001, they followed the recommendations in the 1993 report. The ground movements (slippage) referenced in the article occurred on the City of Cold Lake owned environmental reserve and was determined to be a result of soil saturation caused directly by the actions of a contractor hired by the board to complete some minor drainage modifications. The land has since been completely restored and safeguards are in place to prevent a future recurrence.

For more information contact the [Freedom Ridge Condo Webmaster](#).