

Are seniors being left out in the cold?

When I attended the recreation visioning for SouthFields community center last year, I listened to a seniors' group who asked for a bus so they could go to indoor malls to go walking, as well as meeting space in their community that they could use during the day. The walking track was a key seniors' component for this facility, so too were the additional meeting rooms, all lost due to the egregious decision made by council to put in a pool and remove the gym, walking track and a significant portion of community space without greater community consultation.

Peel Living, on whose board I sit as a director, is developing 60 seniors' housing units in SouthFields Village. The reason for building these units was close proximity to the proposed SouthFields Community Center as reported in the Senior Task Force report of November 2016.

Caledon's Seniors' Task Force should have been consulted on the community centre, as they provide advice regarding older adult issues within the municipality. This would have been the perfect opportunity to get a seniors' perspective.

This is a \$27 million decision with long-lasting implications that affect all of Caledon and it should have been treated as such. The decision by some council members in my opinion was myopic and defies logic.

Here are the key points ignored by some council members:

? Having two pools (Mayfield Recreation Complex and SouthFields) minutes apart would be unsustainable from an operational and financial perspective.

? The existing Mayfield pool will be in jeopardy of closing after spending millions of dollars in upgrades.

? Three Brampton pools are in close proximity to SouthFields Village, as well as a new major Brampton pool opening early 2017.

? Each Caledon pool cost the taxpayer almost \$500,000 in subsidies annually.

? Seniors (largest growing demographic) will have 33 per cent less space, plus no walking track.

? The gym, which is a key element in a community hub for public meetings/events, is being removed to allow for a pool.

This decision was approved by the Mayor and Councillors Downey, Innis and deBoer, less than half of council. Area Councillor Gord McClure did not support the pool, as it was fiscally irresponsible. Don't you think a \$27 million investment should have more than 44 per cent of council support?

Residents need to ask the Mayor and those Councillors why they ignored staff and consultant recommendations. This decision needs to be reconsidered.

Barb Shaughnessy

Regional Councillor, Ward 1,

Town of Caledon