

Town seeking second meeting on proposed tower

By Bill Rea

There are a number of concerns regarding a telecommunications facility proposed for Bolton's north hill, so the Town is asking Rogers Communication to hold another open house.

That doesn't mean the company is obligated to hold the session, but Town councillors last week voted to make the request. It's proposed for the Caledon Centre for Recreation and Wellness property at 14111 Regional Road 50, and one of the concerns is its proximity to St. John Paul II Elementary School. Questions have been raised as to whether parents at the school have been kept properly informed on the issue.

The motion, which was put forward by Councillor Annette Groves, pointed out the Town does have a protocol when it comes to approving telecommunication facilities, and that includes arranging a public information centre (PIC), complete with notification of land owners within 500 metres of the base of the proposed tower.

Robert Boffo, a parent at St. John Paul, told councillors the public consultation process was not properly followed in this case, adding parents were not kept aware of what was going on.

Peggy Tollett, general manager of community services for the Town, told Councillor Johanna Downey there is an extensive process in place for dealing with applications like this, including making sure the school was notified. She added it's up to the school to make sure parents are kept informed.

Councillor Rob Mezzapelli said he was originally going to oppose having another PIC. He pointed out the one that was already held was well attended.

"I was overwhelmed by the attendance," he declared, adding there was considerable opposition to the proposal. He didn't think another public session was going to change that.

But he did agree it was up to the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board to share information like this with parents, and said he would support the call for another PIC.

"I just know we're going to get the exact same response back, only more of it," he remarked.

Tollett confirmed for Councillor Jennifer Innis that Rogers is not required to hold another meeting, although there's nothing wrong with the Town asking.

Groves added she had received an email from the company earlier that day, indicating if the Town wants another session, they would be willing to comply. Groves noted there were a lot of concerns, adding she hoped the PIC would be held while school is in session.

Councillor Nick deBoer observed that since the Town owns the land, the municipality can simply say it's not interested in hosting the tower. Tollett said that direction would have to come from council.

Downey wondered if another PIC was going to change any minds, but Groves countered the public is asking for it.

"I'm sure their opinion will not change," she commented, but added it's important for council to have that input.