

Town councillors are optimistic looking to 2018

By Bill Rea

A new year has started, and Caledon's Town councillors are all looking to it with plenty of optimism.

Each one had some items they are looking forward to seeing progress on

Mayor Allan Thompson said he wants to finish work on the Caledon Community Work Plan this year. He said there were 61 issues under nine categories that needed to be addressed.

"I think we've accomplished what we set out to do," he said.

He also pointed out a lot of work has been done on storm water management along roads in town, and he's hoping these improvements will pay off.

Thompson also said requests for proposals (RFP) are out for the job of bringing broadband internet to more areas of Caledon. The RFPs close March 1 and he's hoping work can start in May.

The Town seems to be working well financially, according to the Mayor.

"I think we've come through with a pretty good budget," he commented, pointing to such projects as the new track approved for Humberview Secondary School.

"I see a lot of positive things starting to happen across town," Thompson remarked, adding there are still efforts to improve customer service.

"The Irish in me always has hope," Ward 12 Regional Councillor Barb Shaughnessy declared, adding she had checked her horoscope and is expecting a great year.

She pointed to the fact that 2018 is going to be an election year, and that will provide new challenges to Caledon. The fact that the Chair of Peel Region will be elected at large will have a "tremendous effect" on Caledon, considering the town's small population.

"I am expecting Caledon won't have a chair again," she commented.

More locally, Shaughnessy observed that new legislation is going to have to be reflected this year in the Town's Official Plan. She added the Town is working on an Official Plan review, which she said will have to be done by 2022.

"That's challenging," she said.

Addressing Ward 1 issues, Shaughnessy pointed out the preparation of terms of reference for a master rehabilitation plans for aggregate operations was covered in this year's budget.

"I think that's extremely important," she said, adding it represents a substantial economic opportunity.

Ward 1 area Councillor Doug Beffort said there are two main areas where he is hoping to see progress.

One of them is to help people who still don't have access to high-speed internet. He said they are paying a premium in their taxes, but are not seeing any benefits. He added there are some areas in the ward that are close to connections, but they haven't got it yet. He's hoping work can progress to see what's needed to get these people hooked up.

The other area Beffort said he's hoping to see progress involves infrastructure and recreation facilities like arenas.

"We can't forget the smaller areas," he remarked, adding infrastructure is needed to maintain service for tourism. He pointed out the developments in Mayfield West have small back yards, meaning these new residents are likely to head north for recreation, and these areas need infrastructure to handle the traffic.

"I am very excited about 2018," Regional Councillor Johanna Downey stated in an email. "Caledon and Ward 2 will see the completion of many great projects as well as the birth of exciting new initiatives."

"I have been fortunate to spend this term learning and working alongside my colleagues on projects such as the Cheltenham Badlands, Southfields Community Centre, Evolve, Peel Boy and Girls Club, Habitat for Humanity, Peel Food Charter and the Credit Valley Heritage Trail," she added. "Representing my community at many tables has given me incredible insight and opportunity to serve my town and region and build positivity in what I know is the greatest community to live, work and play."

Ward 2 area Councillor Gord McClure said he has some personal reasons to be looking positively at the year ahead, as he has another grandchild on the way.

"I'm excited about the new year and I'm excited about life," he declared.

Looking to Town issues, McClure said he's particularly interested in what's going to happen with the GTA-West Corridor.

"I think it's going to be an interesting year," remarked Councillor Jennifer Innis, who's completing her first term as Regional representative for Wards 3 and 4. "I'm excited for the year to come and moving forward with significant projects."

One of those projects involves the third phase of the Caledon East Community Complex. She said the Town is working with the community to determine what it should include.

Innis also said she wants to see progress on Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 28, which covers the Bolton Employment Lands. That has been approved by the Ontario Municipal Board.

"I'm excited that that's moving forward," she said, pointing out it should attract new business and investment, meaning more tax revenue for the Town.

Councillor Nick deBoer, who holds the area council seat in Wards 3 and 4, was also looking forward to the coming phase at the Community Complex, as well as working with developers in Caledon East.

As well, he also said a Town-driven review of the Palgrave Estates policies is coming up this year.

"It should be an action-packed year," he commented.

Annette Groves, Regional councillor for Ward 5, said there are a number of projects on the agenda for the year.

"Hopefully, we can move a few things along," she said.

Groves said she was hoping to have public question periods restored to agendas at meetings.

"It's an opportunity for the public to come up and speak to council directly," she observed.

Ward 5 area Councillor Rob Mezzapelli said there are a couple of items he's hopeful there can be progress on in the coming year.

Seniors' development in Bolton was on his mind, and he observed there are two projects under construction, and he is hoping to see them substantially completed this year.

He also said he's hoping to see the study on the Queen Street Corridor completed this year, so things can progress to the necessary Official Plan designation and zoning for the area.

As well, Mezzapelli said he's looking forward to seeing the completion of the new fire hall for Bolton, and is hoping things can move forward on the Bolton Residential Expansion Study (BRES). He said he wants to see a push for a GO Transit station.