This page was exported from - Caledon Citizen
Export date: Thu Mar 28 9:25:56 2024 / +0000 GMT

It?s hard to argue with 800 jobs

EDITORIAL

When is an influx of 800 new, full-time jobs a bad thing? Better yet, how could an influx of 800 new jobs be a bad thing? Why is $500,000 in property taxes a bad thing?

It depends on who you ask, but some people are really steamed about the fact Amazon plans to build a million-square-foot fulfillment (distribution) centre on Coleraine Road near the even bigger Canadian Tire warehouse.

First, a caveat. We're not saying these objections are meritless, but it's important to keep in mind that this is an election year and one of the most vocal public figures condemning the process, which was not shared with councillors until the announcement was made, is Barb Shaughnessy, who is running for Mayor Allan Thompson's job in the upcoming October municipal election.

Her beef is councillors were left in the dark as decisions were being made and therefore had no say in any of this. Putting ourselves in her shoes, it's easy to see why a city councillor would be put out for being left in the dark on such a big decision, which will affect the area in many ways, not the least of which is a fleet of new trucks further clogging up Highway 50 south of downtown Bolton.

It's already slow moving and frustrating. The notion of many more trucks coming in and out of town is unpleasant, to say the least.

Unfortunately, Amazon request a strict non-disclosure. No one, other than those directly involved, were in the know.

Even news agencies, such as this paper, were not given a heads up other than a phone call the afternoon before the announcement to say something big was going to unfold the next morning.

In our business, the term embargo is an important thing. It means someone tells us something and we keep it under wraps until an agreed date and time. This allows us to do research and write part of the story up beforehand to get it to readers quicker. This was not an option this time. Amazon expressly forbade the city to share the news under embargo.

And don't think the entire process wasn't driven by Amazon. Any mayor would be irresponsible to refuse 800 jobs, so while we're sure town managers did their due diligence and got the best return they could get, it's likely Amazon was driving the deal.

But Shaughnessy isn't the only one raising questions. Some members of a Facebook page devoted to all things Bolton are upset, too. They cite the addition of more trucks, the cost of building new roads for them, and the very real issue of small, downtown businesses closing their doors. A recent post showed three photos of different businesses that had closed down. The photos were all taken from the same street corner. There's a legitimate concern that the village is sacrificing mom-and-pop businesses in favour of goliaths such as Amazon, Canadian Tire and the many big box stores that line Highway 50.

In the end, what fuels a town's tomorrow is youth. Any town or city that expects to grow over time must both retain and attract youth. Young families buying property and putting down stakes for the long haul are crucial. If you lose young people, you lose your future.

One way of attracting young people is to have jobs waiting for them.

Those 800 Amazon jobs might not be anyone's idea of a golden ticket, but they will pay bills, put food on tables and create a more positive local economy. Amazon said the basic jobs on the floor will pay about 30 percent more than retail jobs.

According to the company, ?Associates receive competitive wages, stock and bonuses - that's in addition to our full benefits package that includes health, vision and dental insurance, retirement, generous parental leave, and skills training for in-demand jobs through our Career Choice program, which has over 16,000 participants.?

It comes with logistical challenges that must be met, but we believe the Amazon deal will prove to be a boon for our community.