

Town staff present council with new budget

Written By JOSHUA SANTOS

Caledon councillors had a lot of questions as Town staff presented the latest budget in a late December meeting.

Ward. 5 regional Coun. Annette Groves said she talked with firefighters who want more members in Caledon Village. They asked for five new hires while the Town provided two.

"I know they had originally asked for five. We gave them two and they still believe they need three in order to do their jobs effectively and efficiently, said Groves. I'm going to put that out there. I've always said, we have to prioritize what our core services are. The one area where I won't cut is on fire, police and ambulance. They save lives."

She also asked administration to look at partnerships when it came to the \$300,000 in tax funding that went towards the \$1.8 million Johnston Sports Park project.

Ward. 1 area Coun. Lynn Kiernan asked administration why revenues the Town receives from the aggregate levy were low. The Town is expecting to receive \$191,600 from the levy.

"This is mandated by TORAC (The Ontario Aggregate Resources Corporation), the body that controls the aggregate in the gravel industry, said Heather Haire, treasurer for the Town of Caledon.

Haire explained the amount Caledon receives each year depends on how much aggregate activity the municipality sees.

Kiernan wondered when the last time the rate was changed or look at. She said the aggregate movement on roads and the wear and tear of them have increased significantly.

"The aggregate levy has been a discussed between municipalities and the aggregate industry for a number of years, said Fuwing Wong, manager of infrastructure services for the Town of Caledon. There is a group of municipalities called the TAPMO (Top Aggregate Producing Municipalities of Ontario) and they have taken the lead to negotiate.

"At the last TAPMO meeting I attended, my understanding is they have worked out a higher levy for municipalities that is currently with the provincial government and MTO (Ministry of Transportation to review and approve."

Ward. 2 area Coun. Christina Early asked how the 1.75 per cent cost of living increase compares to industry.

"Generally, what we do is we benchmark with other municipalities, said Haire. For example, I know some of the cities that are larger than us, they might have a slightly higher cost of living increase however I know municipalities like Halton Hills and municipalities that are around the same size and geographical area are around that same percentage."

Ward 3 and 4 area coun. Nick DeBoer asked staff if there was any money earmarked for traffic calming. He said he had a lot of requests and concerns about it during the last term of council.

Wong said there is money for traffic calming adding that part of the reason they're asking for a new traffic coordinator is because of the request for traffic calming measures such as stop signs and cross guards among other supports.

The Town will meet again on Tuesday, Jan. 15 at 9:30 a.m. to further discuss the budget.