

## Belfountain residents will have input on Regional roads study

By Bill Rea

Peel Region is working on an environmental assessment study of some of the roads in and around Belfountain, and the local residents plan to be involved.

About 20 people were on hand last Wednesday for the annual general meeting of the Belfountain Community Organization (BCO), at which there was an update on what's in the works.

BCO member Steve Goyeche told the meeting the study area consists of Winston Churchill Boulevard, Olde Base Line Road, Mississauga Road and Bush Street in Belfountain. He added the key issues revolve around safety and maintenance matters, involving pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

He added a public session is planned for May 9 at Belfountain Public School, and he expects there will be a good turn out for that. "It should be an interesting evening," he remarked.

The session will start with an open house at 6:30 p.m., followed by presentation and discussion from 7 to 9 p.m.

"We're not trying to solve anything tonight," he remarked.

He added there's not much in the way of time pressure on this project. Goyeche said there are at least two years before any construction takes place, meaning there's plenty of opportunity for input.

He also said the environmental assessment is reaching out to a number of interests, including the Belfountain community, although there some involvement from Erin.

Goyeche also said Shaws Creek Road is not included in the study, although it's surrounded by roads that are. He said the study was originally going to cover just Bush Street and Mississauga Road, but it was expanded.

He commented that the traffic patterns coming from Erin have been changing. Mississauga Road used to get about two-thirds of it, but now the split is more even with Winston Churchill.

Councillor Doug Beffort, who was at the meeting, also observed Shaws Creek is a Town road, not Regional.

An advertisement from the Region, which appeared in last week's Citizen, stated the EA is not going to be looking at road widening or increasing the number lanes. It will be looking for solutions that meet the needs of all road users, while maintaining the rural character of the community.

Goyeche commented that the Region is aware of possible development in Belfountain, but the feeling is it won't generate a big addition in traffic.

The whole point, he said, is the roads are not in the greatest shape, or up to Peel's standards, and the aim of the project is to improved that. He also said it doesn't look like the community is being railroaded into anything. Despite that, he said the local residents should make sure they have some input.

Possible solutions could include reconstruction, and Goyeche observed if that were to be done well, the work should last for a long time. There is also the possibility of traffic circles (or roundabouts) that could make traffic movements more efficient, along with improvements to sight lines and adjustments to speed limits. He did say the community has expressed the desire to keep the rolling hills of the area.

Councillor Richard Paterak observed much of the study area is governed by the Niagara Escarpment Plan, meaning the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC), on which he sits, will have to approve what goes forward. He also said NEC has stated the scenic qualities of the area can't be violated.

Acting BCO president David Jobe said the residents have to eventually decide what they want the roads in the hamlet to look like. Paterak added this is a legislated process. Major work requires an environmental assessment, meaning there is input from the residents. But it's not like an election, and the residents might not get what they want.