

BIA will take over farmers' market in Bolton

By Bill Rea

The Town of Caledon is out of the farmers' market business.

Manager of Economic Development Norm Lingard recently made the statement as Caledon council agreed that management of the Bolton Farmers' Market be passed on to the local Business Improvement Area (BIA).

The staff report to council stated the Town, through the economic development department, ran the market for its first three years, and that it was "reasonably successful." But changes were made going into the fifth season, which just ended.

The market in Bolton was started by the Town to make it a community-based event, with the idea that a community group would eventually take it over.

The changes going into the 2014 season, which ran from June 14 until Oct. 11, was to change the name from Caledon Farmers' Market to Bolton Farmers' Market. The location was also changed from the Albion-Bolton Fairgrounds to Mill Street, between Queen and Chapel Streets in the village core. The report stated the change of location was made to facilitate working with BIA, as well as to make the attraction more pedestrian-friendly.

There was also marketing activity leading up to and during the season.

Total sales at the Bolton market amounted to a little more than \$85,000 the first year (2010), and the average for the first three seasons was about \$78,500. There was a sharp drop in 2013 to roughly \$45,000, but 2014 saw the most successful year ever. Total sales came in at \$143,574.25.

There are two other farmers' markets operating in Caledon (one in Inglewood and the other in SouthFields Village). Lingard told council the Town will be working with all three in joint marketing effort.

Councillor Rob Mezzapelli observed that the BIA "will be a key component in making the Bolton market a success.

Lingard told Councillor Nick deBoer the BIA is adding \$6,000 to its budget next year to cover the expense. DeBoer said that was fine, since the market will draw a lot of business to the area.

Lingard also told Councillor Doug Beffort the market is at the point of being self-supporting, as are the other two.

"Neither of these markets has asked us for contributions," he said.

BIA President Jimmy Pountney said it was a cooperative effort between the Town and BIA to bring this about, and he also praised the contributions of Pastor Jeff Enns of Bolton Alliance Church for helping with the volunteer component.

"It's not really the Town's kind of job to run farmers' market things like that," he remarked.

He added the change had been in the works since last year. "It was a phase-in concept from Day One," Pountney said.

He added he was confident things will continue to work well with the farmers' market, especially considering its success this year.

"I don't really see a change in anything," he remarked. "We've already got all the same vendors coming back."