

Caledon East residents speak out against proposed Tim Hortons at public meeting]

By Zachary Roman

Caledon residents recently shared their opinions on a rezoning application that could lead to a Tim Hortons being built in Caledon East.

At 7 p.m. on February 21, a public meeting was held to consider official plan and zoning bylaw amendments submitted by Weston Consulting, on behalf of Ganni Properties Inc., for 16054, 16060, and 16068 Airport Road.

Ganni Properties seeks to rezone the Airport Road properties to permit a one-storey restaurant with a drive-through service facility, as well as two retail/commercial units. Conceptual plans show the drive-through restaurant would be a Tim Hortons.

There was a big turnout for the public meeting, as 17 residents spoke on Ganni Properties' application. A total of 22 written comments about the application were also submitted to the Town.

Cheri Cowan, who has lived in Caledon East for 52 years, said Caledon East desperately needs revitalization in its downtown but a Tim Hortons is not what will accomplish that. She shared concerns about air quality, road safety, and traffic congestion.

Margo Jay delivered a detailed powerpoint presentation in opposition to a Tim Hortons coming to Caledon East, and encouraged Council to vote the application down when it comes time. She claimed when a major corporation like Tim Hortons comes to a Town, other small independent businesses get driven out.

Those in attendance at the meeting were applauding at the end of speakers' delegations, and Planning and Development Committee chair Nick de Boer said while he understands the desire he reminded attendees that under the Planning Act applause is not allowed at public meetings.

Resident Carolyn Vallejo wrote that "the inevitable increase in traffic congestion caused by

the drive-thru will create a safety hazard for pedestrians and other cars."

Pedestrian safety and traffic safety was a recurring concern brought up by many residents at the public meeting. Several of the speakers and people that submitted written comments shared concerns about pollution, litter, congestion, impact on local business, and more.

"A drive-thru does not belong in this section of town," wrote Caledon East resident Therese Xuereb. "If you [politicians] are worried about climate change, why are you killing the downtown area with massive emissions from all the cars idling in a parking lot waiting for a cup of coffee?"

Caledon East resident Tyler Schiller was opposed to Ganni Properties' request when it first came to the Town in 2020. He said his opinion hasn't changed with the submission of Ganni Properties' updated request, which came to the Town last summer. Schiller wrote that the application would "forever be an irreversible burden on Caledon East and its residents."

Ulana Winter, resident of Caledon East, shared her concerns for Caledon East's business community.

"We have" well-run and established businesses on Airport Road that will financially suffer and may be forced to close, depriving residents of the many other and better things they offer beyond the range of Tim Hortons," wrote Winter.

Adam Martin-Robbins said while he isn't opposed to a Tim Hortons, he is opposed to a drive-thru as it would be disruptive to both

traffic and Caledon East's character.

Melissa Brown explained in her written comments that she shares a property line with the properties Ganni Properties wants to rezone. Back in 2020, she started a petition against rezoning which she said received over 1,200 signatures then. It now has over 1,600.

Frank Svab, who lives in Caledon East and owns a business that primarily serves the local community, said a development that encourages more traffic through Caledon East is the opposite of what's needed.

?We should strive for approving projects/developments that are supporting the wellbeing of our residents and our locally owned businesses,? wrote Svab.

Sonia Campagnolo, a resident of Caledon East for 35 years, is opposed to the proposal for many reasons, one of which is that she said not every Town needs a Tim Hortons.

?We have one five minutes North of us and 10 minutes South of us. Is that not enough?? she asked.

Council also asked questions of the applicant, which was attending the meeting virtually.

Regional Councillor Mario Russo raised concerns with the traffic study done by the applicant and suggested it may need to be redone at peak times of the year (mid-summer).

He also said he finds it challenging to imagine how a Tim Hortons would fit into Caledon East.

Mayor Groves and Ward 1 Councillor Lynn Kiernan both raised their concerns about air quality due to idling from vehicles in drive-thrus. Kiernan also expressed concerns with the traffic studies presented by the applicant being from May and October.

Ward 3 Councillor Doug Maskell, whose ward the proposed Tim Hortons would be in, said he would highly encourage his Region of Peel colleagues to undertake an independent traffic study of their own for the proposal.

He and the rest of Caledon Council thanked the many delegates and people who attended the meeting.

No decisions are made by Council at public meetings.