

Caledon residents speak out against settlement boundary expansion

Residents want to see Caledon's farmland preserved, less single-family homes

By Zachary Roman

Less is more for two Caledon residents who spoke at a Region of Peel Council meeting last week.

Residents Kate Hepworth and Dean Cox registered as delegates to speak about the Region of Peel's 2051 official plan, and settlement area boundary expansion in Caledon, on Thursday, April 14.

Hepworth did not mince words speaking first, saying that "Caledon is broken."

"Why are we in this crunch to fit people in?" she asked. "Could it be the acceptance of sprawl has hindered the ability of good planning?"

Hepworth said the proposed Highway 413 takes up a large chunk of land that could be used for more progressive opportunities, such as affordable housing.

"To expand settlement area boundaries is to openly accept that developers are ruling the roost," she said. "Very respectfully, I ask for a zero boundary expansion and a motion to delay submitting the OP (official plan) until June 23."

No members of regional Council had questions for Hepworth and a motion to receive her message was carried.

Cox, a third-generation Caledon resident, delegated directly after Hepworth. He's a Canadian Armed Forces member who is now studying to become a nurse. It's been a dream of his to own a farm in Caledon, according to his request for delegation to the Region of Peel.

He said if Caledon gets eaten up by sprawl and development, his dream will never be realized, adding land in Caledon should be saved for agricultural use and wildlife preservation.

He said he wants the Region of Peel to be a leader on climate change and develop sustainable communities within its urban settlement boundaries.

He said urban sprawl getting closer and closer to Caledon puts a lot of stress on ecologically sensitive areas in the region.

"The area referred to as the 'whitebelt' in Caledon represents some of the best farmland left in Canada," said Cox.

According to the Town of Caledon's website, the whitebelt is the area outside the Greenbelt and existing settlement areas in south Caledon.

"Promoting low-density developments in Caledon's whitebelt is short-sighted," said Cox. "Rather than building single-family homes on undeveloped, ecologically sensitive land, Peel Region should be promoting high-density development in areas where infrastructure such as mass transit already exists," said Cox.

He said sprawl will put more cars on the road at a time when the world needs less cars on the road; that people need development that lets them live close to work, schools, and recreation.

"We're in a unique time in history where climate change and food insecurity issues must be addressed by adopting progressive

policies,? said Cox.

Region of Peel Council did not have any questions for Cox either, and a motion to receive his message was carried.