

Community offers input on 2021 Budget

By **ALYSSA PARKHILL**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A day after Budget discussions at the January 19 General Committee meeting, the Town held a public open house to hear from the community on the proposed 2021 budget.

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) at the Town of Caledon, Carey Herd, opened the public meeting by giving a brief presentation to provide residents some highlights of the proposed 2021 Budget.

The proposal has a tax levy increase of 1.08 per cent with a blended rate of 1.34 per cent, a reduction of 0.92 per cent from the original number after staff delegated funding from other sources on two projects, rather than from the taxpayers.

Staff at the Town continued to look at other ways to reduce the tax levy increase while working to meet the two per cent target goal given by Council back in September.

“Staff took an extra hard look at the Budget and decided to delay a number of hires as well as withdrawing a number head count request,” said Herd.

The COVID-19 pandemic played a strong hand in discussions by staff.

“Since March 2020, staff have been adapting and pivoting to service delivery in response to COVID-19,” said Herd. “I’m very proud of the work we have done.”

Some of these included the Love Local Campaign to support small businesses, moving Council meetings online, a new digital platform for building permits, virtual programs and, most recently, Winterfest.

“The 2021 Proposed Budget takes into consideration the ongoing pressures related to COVID-19,” continued Herd.

Members of the community submitted a variety of questions relating to the proposed budget for staff members and Council to answer and discuss.

One of the questions stated that Brampton and Markham are two municipalities that have frozen property taxes for their residents, but why not in Caledon?

Continued on Page 17