

Community Planning Permit By-law heads to November Public Meeting

By Riley Murphy

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The next stage in the proposed Community Planning Permit By-law for the planned Bolton South GO Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) began Tuesday night at the October 21 Planning and Development meeting.

The planned Bolton South GO MTSA is a mixed-use, high-density, multimodal community in the draft Bolton Secondary Plan, being concurrently led by the Town.

This project supports new development to ?meet Caledon's needs.?

The proposal is to implement a Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) that will apply to the Bolton MTSA Strategic Growth Area.

A CPPS is an accelerated development approvals process that combines zoning, site plan and minor variance application processes.

The CPPS will replace the Town's Zoning By-law for the study area only; it is also part of the Town's initiatives under the Housing Accelerator Fund.

The current process that the CPPS aims to replace takes approximately 180 days from submission to build, whereas the CPPS can achieve this in approximately 75 days.

There are three approval classes in the CPPS: Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3, and each has a varying approval process.

The approval process ranges from Class 1, with Staff approval and no changes needed, to Class 3, which involves larger variations and requires council approval, along with mail to residents within 120m, as well as website posting and physical signage.

The ?streamlined approvals process steps? include pre-consultation, submission, a 45-day review, and the decision.

There are no legislative requirements to provide notice for any CPPS application.

In the presentation, it was shared that all municipalities that have implemented, or that are working towards implementing a CPPS, have instituted some level of required notification for specific CPPS applications.

There will be various criteria for considering variations in this process.

In the presentation, it was also shared that a CPP By-law allows for additional community benefits, such as affordable housing, referred to as ?facilities, services, and matters? in exchange for additional height or density.?

In the project, they just completed the statutory public open house last week, and have moved on to the public meeting.

When it comes to implementing this system, it was noted that there is often a ?learning curve.?

?Staff, Council, stakeholder, landowner and public education and consultation is vital.?

Eric Lucic, Commissioner of Planning and Development and Chief Planner, Town of Caledon, shared with the Citizen that the CPPS

is being advanced in a pilot-area as a mechanism to more efficiently process development applications and expedite diverse housing supply.

?The CPPS aims to implement this envisioned policy framework by providing clear rules for development processes and application requirements, land use and design standards, as outlined in the draft CPP By-law to guide development in a way that meets housing, employment and community planning needs,? says Lucic.

He adds that the CPPS makes the planning process more efficient.

?Shorter approval timelines allow all forms of development, including housing, employment, and community use to proceed quickly and efficiently, while transparency gives landowners, developers, and residents a clear understanding of what can be built and how applications are reviewed, helping build trust in the planning process.?

Moving into the public meeting, the following steps would be a Final CPP By-law Development, also hearing public consultation, with council approval by the end of November.

When the presentation was finished, it was 11 p.m., which procedurally resulted in a Council vote to continue the meeting.

Following the vote to continue the meeting, a loss of quorum for Council resulted with Councillors Christina Early and Dave Sheen leaving the meeting, moving the public consultation for the Community Planning Permit By-law to the November 11 Planning and Development Committee Public Meeting where residents can again register to delegate or ask questions.

Sheen notes that his decision to cause loss of quorum was deliberate, as he feels this matter should be discussed with full attention.

?After several hours of earlier agenda items, it was clear that everyone in the room, committee members, senior staff, clerks, and the few remaining members of the public, was fatigued,? says Sheen. ?It became apparent that my departure would cause the committee to lose quorum, I chose to take that step deliberately to ensure that this important CPPS matter would be revisited when all members, and hopefully more residents, could bring fresh eyes and their full attention to it.?

He says after listening to the presentation he felt that the CPPS ?is not a small procedural adjustment, it is a conceivably a major new approach to development approvals, and not necessarily a better one.?

Sheen says that his intent was not to delay for delay's sake or to stage any kind of protest, but, ?to make sure that both Council and the public could approach this topic with the focus and clarity it deserves.?

?The people of Caledon deserve an open, well-informed discussion on whether this new planning process truly serves the public interest, and that conversation shouldn't happen when everyone is too tired, or simply not present, to engage properly,? he says.

Mayor Annette Groves says that she was very disappointed ?in the decision yesterday made by a few Members of our Council to abandon a meeting causing loss of quorum.?

?These meetings are to give the public a chance to hear important discussions, have their voices heard and engage in the democratic process. In addition, consultants were scheduled to be present, and now there is an expense for work that was not able to be shared. This decision of a few to abandon a meeting resulted in a waste of public money and a missed opportunity for transparency and accountability,? says Groves.

She says that watching the meeting shut down because of a lost quorum due to Councillors' leaving was ?disheartening and contrary to the commitment we owe our residents as elected officials.?

?As an advocate of openness and transparency for our residents; I hope future meetings will reflect a stronger commitment of our

Council to public engagement and responsible use of taxpayer resources.?