

Council passes motion to amend MZO process in the face of significant growth

By Rob Paul

Caledon Council passed a motion Tuesday to clarify the process by which it considers MZO (Ministerial Zoning Order) requests.

Prior to Council considering any MZO request, the Town must now hold a public information meeting, Town staff must recommend its approval, it must conform with provincial plans, and include a clear statement of justification.

This comes as a result of the unprecedented growth the Town of Caledon is projected to see over the next 30 years leading to premature MZO request designed to circumvent the normal approval process.

The decision to adopt the motion came as a result of Council becoming concerned about the sheer amount of MZO requests the Town has received in recent months as the approach the finalization of the Town Official Plan.

"We're ratifying a motion that identifies a clear process," said Councillor Lynn Kiernan.

The most recent MZO request came from the Humber Station Village Landowners Group Inc., which asked that Council endorse and support an MZO for the lands located south of Healey Road, east of Humber Station Road, and north of Mayfield Road.

"I think once staff has a look at this then if this requires support for an MZO then I'd expect since we've approved the new process tonight and ratified it then Staff are going to deliver that exact message to us," said Councillor Nick deBoer. "This allows them to dig into it and do some work first and then it'll come back to us, and they'll tell us what makes sense here."

Council chose to use the request as an opportunity to send it back to staff for more information rather than send it through the newly amended process. Councillor Christina Early was the lone Councillor against the motion of sending it back to staff because she wanted to see the new process used.

"We are so close to this Official Plan coming to fruition and being voted on and I've got to say it's starting to bother me with the amount of MZOs coming and wanting a quick decision from this Council and I'm just not sure it's appropriate," said Early. "I have no problem with MZOs, I think it's a significant tool in the toolkit, but I feel there are so many jumping the gun. It seems like every week we've got somebody coming with an MZO."

Council intends to follow through on the new process and exercise it once Staff has a closer look at the request.