

Council to voice opposition to Province over 413-related Bill

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Caledon Council is unhappy with recently-introduced Provincial legislation.

On November 12, Caledon councillors unanimously voted to share opposition to Bill 212, the Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time Act, with the Province.

Bill 212 includes the Building Highways Faster Act and Highway 413 Act.

A motion for Caledon to make its opposition to Bill 212 known was proposed by Ward 3 Councillor Doug Maskell. Among many other concerns, he did not like that the Bill would prevent Caledon residents from applying for an adjustment to the date their property would be expropriated to build the 413. Under Bill 212, a Caledon resident would have 90 days to leave their property or face steep fines.

Maskell also did not approve of the fact Bill 212 exempts Highway 413 from the Environmental Assessment Act.

Maskell's motion was discussed extensively by local lawmakers and delegates at Caledon Council's November 12 General Committee meeting.

Maskell said he wanted to make it clear his motion was not a vote against the 413; rather a vote against the measures Bill 212 permits to get the highway built.

Picture a situation in which a family has lived on a farm for 100 years, or two seniors who've lived in their home for 50 years, or a disabled person or a family with children in school. They receive a notice of expropriation and have 90 days to vacate their land. They have no right to appeal to a judge for additional time, said Maskell.

That's not my Ontario, not my Caledon residents need to be protected from gross government overreach.

Mayor Annette Groves said Bill 212 seems heavy-handed and that the Province dropped the ball by introducing the bill.

I'm not sure that a bill like this should have been tabled. I think there should have been some consultation with the community, with the residents, said Groves.

Groves noted she'd like to send a letter to the Province about Caledon's concerns and requested it be added to Maskell's motion.

Ward 4 Councillor Nick de Boer stated he would like the motion to clearly state Caledon does not oppose the 413, but measures in Bill 212.

Ward 2 Councillor Dave Sheen said Caledon is kidding itself if it thinks the 413 won't be built.

The government's going to build the 413 one way or the other; what they're doing with Bill 212 is putting the tools in place to do it the way I read Bill 212, it goes too far. It is draconian it runs roughshod over Caledon residents' rights and I can't support that.

Ward 5 Councillor Tony Rosa said he can't support Bill 212 as it is written in good conscience.

Sharon Sommerville, of the group Headwaters Stops the 413, said Bill 212 will have a catastrophic impact. She said it implements egregious antidemocratic policies and that citizens deserve better.

Resident Angela Piscitelli said Bill 212 does not give people nearly enough time to prepare for a move, especially seniors.

Former Caledon Councillor Ian Sinclair said Bill 212 is an abominable attack on democracy and that it's sad he had to come make comments against such a deplorable piece of legislation.?