

Council wants air tests in Bolton and Caledon village

By Bill Rea

The Town will be calling on the province to conduct air quality tests during the summer in Bolton and Caledon village.

Caledon councillors, sitting in General Committee, approved the modified motion that had been put forth by Councillor Annette Groves Tuesday. The motion is to go to council this coming Tuesday (March 29) for ratification.

The Caledon village testing will look into things like fine particulate matter and silica from aggregate operations.

Groves' original motion called for testing to be conducted before and after the new Canadian Tire development at the corner of Healey Road and Coleraine Drive opens next year. The idea was to provide a point of comparison of 'the ambient air quality implications' from the development.

But several councillors, along with Mayor Allan Thompson, had problems with singling out Canadian Tire. That resulted in a lengthy discussion, and debate of a number of amendments to the motion.

'To me, it's an embarrassment,' Councillor Gord McClure declared. 'We need Canadian Tire. As a taxpayer, its keeping my taxes down. It's an embarrassment that we're even talking about this.'

Groves' motion had observed the Province conducted tests on the air in Bolton and Caledon village in 2006, and that there has been more industry started up in both areas, including aggregate operations in Caledon village.

Bolton resident Sherry Brioschi was pleased that the motion had come forth, observing there have been concerns in the public about the impacts from the truck traffic generated by the Canadian Tire development.

'Council is moving in the right direction,' she declared.

She did ask that the timing of the study be nailed down. The motion didn't address it, but Brioschi said it should be specified for July, August and September, as opposed to winter.

But Thompson stressed his concerns with identifying one business in the motion.

'I think it's a dangerous precedent,' he said, pointing to the Town's efforts to attract business to the area.

He also observed the 2006 tests were conducted around St. John the Baptist Elementary School, and he put forth an amendment to the motion stating that's where the next testing should take place.

Groves wasn't going along with that.

'We needed a trigger to begin another air-quality test here,' she commented, adding that was Canadian Tire. She stressed she wasn't trying to pick on one company. She also pointed out that in the time leading up to the approval of the development, Canadian Tire had addressed air quality matters, and produced experts. She added Peel Region's Medical Officer of Health at the time, Dr. David Mowat, raised no issues with it.

Groves added she didn't see the harm in doing the testing around Canadian Tire, observing if problems are found, they can be addressed.

'The community is asking for this,' she declared, adding she was pushing for it as a representative of the community. 'This is not picking on one particular company.'

'The big trigger is really the massiveness of Canadian Tire,' Councillor Barb Shaughnessy added.

Councillor Nick deBoer observed there have been a lot of properties developed in the area, with a number of warehouses going up. To use Canadian Tire as an example would be a mistake, he argued. As well, he pointed out truck traffic patterns have changed a lot from the opening of the Bolton Arterial Road (BAR).

Councillor Johanna Downey supported the idea of doing the tests in the same location as before and in summer. She argued doing them around Canadian Tire 'creates the optics of bias, and I couldn't support that.'

Shaughnessy suggested Canadian Tire might favour the testing Groves was suggesting, observing it might show they're doing a good job at preserving air quality.

She also commented that Thompson's amendment 'takes the guts' out of the motion.

Groves pointed out members of the community didn't think St. John the Baptist was the right location for testing in 2006, and she put forth an amendment of her own to have it set up close to Bolton's industrial area.

DeBoer pointed out doing it in a different location will generate different numbers, which would get in the way of making comparisons to have was in place 10 years ago.

'I think location is extremely important,' Groves countered, adding experts from the Province can determine the most appropriate place.

Shaughnessy argued the testing should take place near where the trucks are. Because of BAR, they've been moved from Regional

Road 50 to Coleraine.

Downey brought up the possibility of testing from more than one location, stressing the importance of using St. John the Baptist so comparisons can be made over the 10 years.

?You won't be able to count on the data you get if you change the location,? she said.

?It's not the right location,? Groves replied, as she advocated letting the Provincial experts call that shot.

Councillor Jennifer Innis, who chairs the committee, said she had spoken to Councillor Rob Mezzapelli, who was not at Tuesday's meeting. He told her he favoured the testing, but not the singling out of one company.