

Councillor motions to establish lobbyist registry for Caledon

Dark sky by-law also explored

By Zachary Roman

A Caledon Councillor would like to see more transparency around individuals and groups who lobby those in municipal office in Caledon.

At Caledon Council's May 9 General Committee meeting, Ward 3 Councillor Doug Maskell brought forward a motion requesting that the Town of Caledon establish a lobbyist registry and appoint a lobbyist registrar.

In his motion, Maskell noted the Region of Peel established a lobbyist registry in March 2017.

He added that the City of Brampton established a lobbyist and gift registry in January 2016, as well as a new online tool to view the registry in October 2022.

Maskell's motion requested that Town of Caledon staff investigate what it would take to establish a lobbyist registry then report back to the Town's Governance Review Committee.

A lobbyist registry would record and regulate communication between public office holders and those who engage in lobbying activities, said the motion, by tracking correspondence and making it available to the public.

Maskell's motion said lobbying is a legitimate and legal activity that's part of an individual's, group's, or company's right to communicate with elected officials and government staff. It also said the purpose of creating a lobbyist registry would be to ?enhance the transparency and integrity of business conducted at the Town of Caledon.?

At the same May 9 Council meeting, Maskell also motioned to create a dark sky by-law for the Town of Caledon.

He said unnecessary and improperly designed light fixtures can cause glare, light pollution, and wasted resources. Maskell said glare and light pollution can result in hazardous conditions for all modes of transportation and diminish Caledon residents' ability to view the night sky.

Adding to his motion, Maskell said darkness is natural for humans and animals and that a lack of it can have negative effects. His motion went on to say Caledon residents, and visitors to Caledon, value maintaining the beauty and high quality of the night sky here.

Ontario's Municipal Act permits municipalities to regulate illumination; Caledon does not currently have a by-law regulating illumination.

Maskell's motion asked that Town staff investigate the matter and report back to Council at a future meeting.

The request to investigate implementing a lobbyist registry was approved on consent. The request to investigate implementing a dark sky by-law was approved after being amended to mention how it could be done through the Town's Official Plan process.