

Councillors name youth shelter in Brampton

By Bill Rea

A new interim youth shelter is in the works for Brampton, and Peel Regional councillors spent several minutes recently debating what to call it.

In the end, they went along with the staff recommendation to call it Brampton Queen Street Youth Shelter.

It's slated to go on Queen Street East, just west of Goreway Drive.

Regional staff reported to council the facility is slated to be operational some time this month. It's to be used as a 30-bed emergency youth shelter. It's subject to a two-year lease, with two options to extend it for one year. The Salvation Army Peel will be providing case management services and Our Place Peel will offer outreach services and aftercare supports.

Human Services Commissioner Janice Sheehy told Mississauga Councillor Carolyn Parrish some people would be staying at the facility a couple of weeks, according to the current plan.

Parrish suggested an amendment to call it a residence, as opposed to a shelter. She said those youth seeking jobs would have to put addresses on applications, and the word 'shelter' could be viewed negatively by employers.

'I thought it was a pretty kind of cold name for a youth shelter,' Brampton Councillor Gael Miles observed.

She added taking the word 'shelter' out of the name might result in young people being in need not realizing the facility is available.

She agreed 'residence' is a nicer word, but it might not convey the right message.

'The kids know where the shelters are,' Parrish responded, while Miles opted for the name proposed by staff and let them address Parrish's concerns later.

Regional CAO David Szwarc pointed out that young people looking for work need only put down a street address, not the name of the facility.

Caledon Councillor Barb Shaughnessy thought the word 'residence' sounded permanent. She suggested use of the word 'interim,' adding she supported the idea of staff taking another look.