

Facilitator trying to move development process along

By Bill Rea

A Provincial official is trying to expedite the process for the proposed Canadian Tire facility in Bolton's industrial area.

Provincial Development Facilitator Paula Dill is working with Town staff, at the request of former Infrastructure Minister Bob Chiarelli, to try and help move things along.

Town CAO Doug Barnes reported to Caledon council Tuesday that Dill is reviewing the timing of the planning approvals for employment lands. He stressed that Dill does not have the authority to make decisions, but can try to find solutions and agreements on development problems.

Canadian Tire is interested in placing a large distribution centre and office facility on about 180 acres at the northwest corner of Coleraine Drive and Healey Road in Bolton.

Barnes' report stated Mayor Marolyn Morrison met with Chiarelli and his staff in December to look into ways of getting through the process of associated Official Plan amendments faster.

The Town asked for an amendment to Peel Region's Official Plan in 2010 to expand the Bolton settlement boundary for employment lands on the west side of Coleraine Drive. Barnes reported the Region can't deal with that request until the Town's Official Plan amendment pertaining with growth compliance with the Province's Places to Grow Act clears the Ontario Municipal Board.

He also pointed out timing is an issue, in that Canadian Tire is anxious to begin construction soon so the new facility can be ready by 2016.

Barnes also told Councillor Richard Paterak they needed a valid application to get the assistance from the Minister, which is why they had to specify the Canadian Tire application.

Chiarelli asked Dill to meet with the affected parties late in January.

"Timeliness is of the essence on this matter, and I would ask that you commence work on this on a priority basis," he wrote in a letter (a copy of which was included in the agenda package for Tuesday's council meeting).

But not everyone is pleased with this.

Bolton resident Sherry Brioschi had a number of issues to bring up with council. She observed that Morrison had asked Chiarelli to request Dill get involved, and she wondered if the Mayor received direction in open or closed session of council. Morrison told her it was the result of an in-camera session, and she would provide the date of that meeting.

The Mayor added the employment lands set aside on the west side of Coleraine are important to the Town, especially since the GTA West corridor has tied up potential employment lands in the Mayfield West area.

Brioschi told Morrison she was "empathetic" to the problems facing the Town.

"I know you guys are in a situation because of that corridor," she said.

Morrison reminded Brioschi the lands being discussed are intended to be employment lands, whether it's Canadian Tire or some other company that develops them.

Brioschi countered that she didn't think this is the right location for a development like this, commenting she had no particular problems with the company. There has been a lot of concern expressed about the health hazards from the truck traffic expected from the development.

"We're going to be creating a smog at the bottom end of Bolton," she charged, adding Tullamore would be a more appropriate location.

Morrison said her motivation is to bring jobs and assessment to Caledon to make the town more sustainable. She said there could be some 800 jobs resulting from this, adding the plan calls for about 101,000 square feet of office space.

She also charged there has been a lot of inaccurate information getting out about this.

"This is absolutely ridiculous," she declared.

-30-