

Groves now seeking amendment to MZO

By Bill Rea

The massive Canadian Tire development in Bolton is still a talking point, but Caledon councillors are having trouble getting the conversation started.

For the second time in the last couple of weeks, a motion from Councillor Annette Groves was withdrawn just as discussion was starting Tuesday. Groves, announced, however, that she has another motion that will be put on a future agenda.

Groves made the move Tuesday in light of confidential information from solicitors which was included in the closed-session portion of the meeting's agenda.

The recent assortment of motions have been prompted by Canadian Tire's desire to change the site plan for the massive distribution centre, which is currently being constructed at the corner of Coleraine Drive and Healey Road in Bolton. The amendment would allow for the production and storage of hydrogen on the site, to be used internally to power equipment.

The motion that was on Tuesday's agenda of the Planning and Development Committee of council called on Town staff to ask the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to amend a Ministerial Zoning Order (MZO) it issued for the site in July 2013 to exclude the production of hydrogen.

The issuance of the MZO in 2013 allowed the development to proceed.

A motion Groves had put forth for the Aug. 23 meeting called for an Official Plan amendment and rezoning for the site in light of the proposal to include the production of hydrogen. Discussion of that motion ended very quickly when Councillor Jennifer Innis, who was chairing the meeting, ruled the Town did not have the authority to make such a move, since local planning authority had been superseded by the MZO.

The newest motion from Groves calls for Town staff to request an amendment to the MZO to include a definition of hydrogen production and storage as a land use, if the risks are found acceptable.

The preamble of the motion notes hydrogen production and storage were not included in the approved site plan for the development. It also notes that hydrogen is very flammable with quite different characteristics from gasoline or petroleum products normally used for fuelling distribution centre equipment.

Groves also indicated a desire to have the information from the solicitor, which was referred to as a memo, made public.

"This matter is extremely important to my community," she said, adding area residents are "up in arms" over the proposed hydrogen provisions. "I'm just looking for a fair and open and transparent process."

She also said everything in the memo is public knowledge.

"I don't think we should be going in-camera with this memo," Groves commented after the meeting. "Everything in it is public."