

Hydrogen approved at Canadian Tire

By Bill Rea

Hydrogen production has been approved for the Canadian Tire distribution centre under construction in Bolton.

The Town announced Tuesday the Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) had reviewed the hydrogen system that's been proposed for the facility and had accepted the design.

The corporation sought an amendment to the site plan for the development to allow for the production and storage of hydrogen, and the plan is to use it internally to run equipment. The centre is currently being constructed at the northwest corner of Healey Road and Coleraine Drive in Bolton.

TSSA is the regulatory body for all distribution, storage and dispersing of fuel, and is the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) for the Fuel Safety Program, Rob Hughes, manager of development west for the Town stated in a memo to councillors, dated early Tuesday afternoon, a copy of which was obtained by the Citizen. Hydrogen, along with other fuels, falls under this program.

Mayor Allan Thompson was pleased with the ruling, commenting it will benefit the local economy, facilitating a new business coming into the area, providing jobs and spin-off benefits.

It's a big job creator, he said, adding the development is also going to provide about 120,000 square feet of office development.

Thompson also expressed his faith in hydrogen as a fuel.

To me, it's a green energy, he remarked. I'm a big believer in what I've learned.

The Mayor pointed out there are a lot of trucks on highways that are powered by Hydrogen, and he expects there will be a lot more in the next 10 years.

It's good for the environment, he said.

But Councillor Annette Groves was less than pleased with the news. She has been calling for some time to have a public process on the proposal.

I'm just disappointed in this entire procedure, she remarked, charging the public was given no opportunity to take part or comment on the issue.

Plans to use hydrogen on the site have been discussed for some years. It was announced that the corporation was suspending the plan in October 2014, and assurances had been issued at the time that any attempt to resurrect the proposal would be public and transparent.

They went through the back door again, Groves charged, adding she was very disappointed the Town let them do it. Once again, the public was shut out of a process they had concerns about.

I'm so disappointed, she added. If there's nothing to hide, why not allow the public to get heard and be heard?

She also charged that if Canadian Tire is such a good company, it needs to respect communities.

All we were asking for was a public process, she added.