

Illegal dumping on Boston Mills Road part of Caledon-wide issue: Residents

Neighbours also concerned about speeding vehicles, roadside alcohol and cannabis use

By Zachary Roman

Ongoing instances of 'undesirable behaviour' on Boston Mills Road have the street's residents concerned.

At Caledon's March 22 General Committee meeting, Boston Mills Road residents Cynthia Wood and Alexis Fraser appeared as a delegation to ask for Council's support in eliminating the problem.

The pair brought with them a petition they and 31 of their neighbours signed, as well as a letter to the Town of Caledon. In the letter, residents state they've seen the following activities taking place on Boston Mills Road: Dumping of hazardous materials, household waste, organic waste and general refuse; speeding and reckless driving; and increased stopping and idling on the road to loiter, litter and participate in undesirable activities such as drinking alcohol, smoking cannabis and 'bush sex.'

In their letter, residents claim some people participating in such activities have become hostile when asked to leave.

This has, in turn, made residents feel unsafe.

To mitigate the problem, the residents are asking the Town to implement the following changes on Boston Mills Road between Highway 10 and Airport Road: The addition of 'no stopping' signs; the reduction of the speed limit from 60 kilometres per hour to 40; additional 'no dumping' signs; and other means of deterring the parking of cars such as road-narrowing.

Residents wrote they appreciated the town's efforts to increase police presence in their neighbourhood but said it had done little to resolve the issues they face.

Addressing Council, Wood said she and her family often pick up trash on the road. In doing this, some of the items they've found include needles, batteries and used condoms.

'A dump of 100 chickens near a neighbour's mailbox on May 27, 2019?' was reported by Wood to Council, along with a photo of said chickens.

Wood also reported to council three instances of stolen vehicles being brought to Boston Mills Road and burned. She said she was worried the fires could have spread under the right conditions and caused loss of property or life.

Councillor Christina Early thanked the delegation for attending the meeting and said she can see why the problems mentioned would be very concerning for residents. She asked the delegation which of their proposed solutions they'd like the Town to prioritise and they said the 'no stopping' signs or, road narrowing so there's nowhere for people to park on the road.

The delegation's concerns led Council to begin discussing how illegal dumping is a Town-wide issue. Councillor Lynn Kiernan said she'd think everyone on Council feels for what the Boston Mills Road residents are going through.

'You're in a very secluded area, so you're very attractive for the dumping and it's shameful,' she said.

Mayor Allan Thompson said every time signage is installed and patrolling increased to deter illegal activities, the problem gets pushed further north in Caledon.

'Signage basically on all the roads is going to have to be essential, not just for parking but no dumping as well,' said Thompson.

?...We have to look at it from a whole-town approach.?

While Councillor Kiernan was in total support of the delegation and implementation of signage, she said in her experience signage hasn't been as helpful as she'd like it to be. She was also concerned for the safety of Boston Mills Road residents if they were to try and enforce 'no parking' signs themselves.

Kiernan suggested having more opportunities for free waste disposal at the town's recycling centres. Early and Coun. Johanna Downey brought forward an idea to include the hours and/or contact information of the recycling centres on 'no dumping' signs.

Councillor Jennifer Innis said solving the illegal dumping problem will take collaboration from bylaw enforcement, the Town, Regional government and the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP).

She asked town staff to take this into account when preparing their report on the issue.

Innis later added it would be beneficial to know how much the town spends on cleaning up illegal dumping, so that number could be presented if help is sought from the provincial government.

'It's all about money and the tonnage of waste that we're actually picking up, that's what's going to really hit home with the provincial government,' said Councillor Innis.

She also suggested including the maximum a person can be charged under the Provincial offences act for illegal dumping on 'no dumping' signs as an added deterrent.

A motion for Council to receive the Boston Mills Road residents' petition and have it be referred to staff to create a report on the matter was carried.