

Local community group asks for Council's help with traffic noise

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

A Caledon resident group was developed by the community to discuss and find solutions to the high levels of traffic, and the noise that comes with it, in the Town's west end.

Judy Mabee, Chair of the group, made a presentation to Council on December 8, to inform lawmakers on traffic issues and requests for solutions.

The West Caledon Traffic Group began meeting in May of this year to address these problems and are now asking for the local government's help.

Some key issues the community group have found are noises from altered mufflers on vehicles and motorcycles, visits from stunt drivers, large groups of vehicles, reckless speeding as well as heavy trucks and transports using prohibited routes or driving recklessly.

"These drivers are not tourists attracted to the quiet wanderings of West Caledon, they predominantly come in the dark, when the roads are empty. They like the silence of the area, so they can hear their mufflers echoing off the escarpment," explained Mabee.

Communities impacted by these issues include Alton Village, Caledon Village, Cheltenham, Terra Cotta, Inglewood, and the Forks of the Credit in Belfountain.

"This is a safety issue to residents and visitors to Caledon, and our wildlife," she continued.

Together, the group conducted community traffic studies in order to implement Community Safety Zones, which were approved by the Town and established in Wards 1 and 2.

Mabee presented some requests from Council, including updating Town of Caledon bylaws to include traffic noise and daytime noise limits, an increase number of bylaw officers, increases to fines, points for noise violations, and the installation of speed enforcement and acoustic cameras.

They also requested that the Town of Caledon review the Caledon Tourism Campaign to promote locations other than high traffic areas, as well as to adopt the Peel Police Noise Maker Project.

"We know that Peel Regional Police have implemented these programs that have been a successful framework to pull over noisy vehicles," said Mabee. "Caledon needs a specific campaign to raise awareness."

Project Noisemaker by the Region of Peel began in July of this year, to identify and, hopefully, reduce the number of vehicles with modified exhaust systems throughout the Region.

Councillors agreed with Mabee on several points of her presentation including making changes to the current bylaw, as well as reviewing the Town's tourism plan to shift visitors away from high traffic areas.

"This is the first time that a group of villages actually started talking amongst themselves about a common problem, noise, traffic, volumes racing and so on," said Ward 1 Regional Councillor Ian Sinclair. "That's a milestone right there."

?We're looking at in the Official Plan Review an increase of 300,000 people in the next 30 years. This isn't temporary; we're looking for solutions for the whole Town of Caledon, for people coming up here, wanting to get an escape from big urban areas, and just overwhelming the countryside this point,? he continued.

Council brought forward a motion to review the Town's tourism plan, to encourage the Caledon Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) to investigate the possibility of implementing the Peel Police Noise Maker Project as well as to work with the Region of Peel to address traffic and noise issues in the west end of Caledon, with the installation of automated speed cameras and acoustic traffic cameras.

The motion also urges the Province to put into effect immediately amendments to Section 75.1 of the Highway Traffic Act to ?make it an offence to tamper with motor vehicles by removing, bypassing, defeating or rendering inoperative all or part of a motor vehicles emission control system; or modifying a motor or motor vehicle in any way that results in increased emissions from the level to which it was originally designed or certified by the manufacturer of the motor or motor vehicle.?

The motion was passed unanimously.