

Local residents fighting to protect heritage area in Bolton

Written By ALYSSA PARKHILL

Caledon's council hosted a public meeting on Oct 22 with a presentation highlighting an application of an eight-story condominium building that is proposed to be built on land at 84 Nancy Street, in Bolton.

It was a full house at Town Hall, with dozens of local residents on hand to offer their thoughts, opinions and concerns to area councillors.

Planning for the project is in the very early stages, while the Town has yet to make any decisions on whether to go ahead with the construction. The purpose of the public meeting was to gain perspective from the residents to help with councils' consideration.

The plan was presented by Weston Consulting, who researched and put together a design and plan on where the condominium would go, and the access they would have. They claimed current plans would see the condo building erected without interfering with the environment and surrounding infrastructure.

The condominium is planned to be 32.7 metres high on 1.9 acres of land. It would be located in the middle of residential and recreational areas in Bolton.

Many Caledon residents in attendance on Tuesday (Oct. 22) did not agree with the plan. Many were left frustrated and angered, while one resident actually broke down into tears at the very thought of a condominium building being built in the heart of Bolton.

One of the key factors that residents felt strongly about was that this development would affect not only the community, but the historic and aesthetic image of Bolton. A majority of the houses in the area are historic structures that residents feel would be wrong to even consider destroying.

One of the local residents, Susan Pots, has lived in Bolton since 1969.

"Nancy Street is the centrepiece of the heritage district. Nancy is the official bypass for the traffic lights in the valley," remarks Pots. "Nancy Street cannot afford any more traffic."

Kelley Potter was the first speaker at the meeting. She shared some valuable words for Council, with her neighbours and fellow residents hanging on her every word.

"The developer would like to take an empty lot that is currently environmentally protected and an iconic part of the landscape of the Caledon and Bolton community, specifically to build an eight-story condominium building. They are asking the Town to allow them to tear away most of the hill so that they can build a building that is higher than the highest allowable height, to have more than the designated amount of the population to land ratio, to be built with less than the basic standards of parking all on the edge of the newly designated heritage districts," says Potter.

She added, "We are not against development; indeed, we understand that it is necessary as our town grows and changes, but we feel that it needs to be created responsibly and in keeping with the area within which it will be built. At the end of the day, this is in the hands of Council. I am going to trust that they will look at this from all angles and know that this is not in the best interest of this street, this heritage area and this community overall. I hope that part of their legacy will not include, literally changing the landscape of Bolton."

Other factors were mentioned on the affects the new building would have on the community such as, large amounts of traffic, unmaintained drains, impact on regular wildlife, the iconic hills, equipment, noise, dust, vibration and shifting, to name only a few.

Council listened and understood the residents' concerns and took them all into consideration. A final decision won't be forthcoming anytime soon, with this issue expected to drag on into 2020.