

Motion to support protection of turtles passed at Planning meeting

By **ZACHARY ROMAN**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Caledon will take steps to help protect turtles living in Town.

At Caledon Council's April 16 meeting, Ward 3 Councillor Doug Maskell brought forward a motion requesting that Town staff be directed to incorporate specific turtle protection actions into the ongoing Natural Heritage and Urban Forest Strategy, including but not limited to road ecology, nest protection and habitat enhancement actions.

Further, the motion requested that Town staff engage the Headwaters Turtle Protectors, a volunteer group based in Dufferin and Caledon, in the creation of the Natural Heritage and Urban Forest Strategy.

The motion was passed with the support of all Caledon Councillors.

"I am very excited to bring this forward and I'm looking forward to working with many groups in the community to establish this," said Maskell. "Turtles as we know are under serious threat in our community."

Maskell's motion notes that Ontario is home to eight species of turtles, all of which are listed federally as species at risk.

He added that Town staff frequently notice turtles nesting on the side of town roads and have taken actions to minimize impacts to these turtles; and, that Headwaters Turtle Protectors are also taking action to protect turtles and their habitats.

"Habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, road mortality are key factors in the rapid decline of local turtle populations," reads Maskell's motion.

He noted that in Caledon's Official Plan, the Town is committed to protect, maintain, and as appropriate, enhance and restore physical and biological systems and features that support ecosystem integrity.