

National Wildlife Centre seeks exemption from development, cash-in-lieu fees for wildlife field hospital

Council refers request to staff, but releases grant funding from Council golf tournament

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Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A local non-profit is seeking help from the Town of Caledon for its building project.

The National Wildlife Centre (NWC) is a Caledon non-profit that's going to build a wildlife field hospital to treat sick, injured and orphaned wildlife.

NWC Executive Director Tracey Cox, in letters to Caledon Council, said the NWC can only get a building permit once all fees are paid. Cox said the NWC has paid all fees except cash-in-lieu and development fees.

Cox said the NWC's field hospital qualifies for an exemption from development fees as it is zoned as a non-residential agricultural building. She said the NWC can be exempt from cash-in-lieu fees as well since it is a not-for-profit charity.

Cox noted in her letters the NWC wants to get its building permit and get its foundation built before the cold of winter sets in.

"Thank you for your consideration of this request," wrote Cox. "This hospital is long overdue and will directly benefit the citizens of Caledon."

Regional Councillor Mario Russo said procedurally it would be best if Cox's request was referred to staff.

He put forward a motion asking "that the request from the National Wildlife Centre regarding an exemption from development fees and cash-in-lieu fees be referred back to staff to be brought forward at the November 21, 2023 planning and development committee meeting."

This motion was carried with Ward 4 Councillor Nick de Boer in opposition; he wanted the NWC to be able to begin its work right away.

A motion from Regional Councillor Christina Early was put forward in hopes of helping the NWC in the interim.

Early asked "that the National Wildlife Centre be provided the remaining primary grant funding, previously awarded through the Caledon Council Community Golf Tournament, in the amount of \$48,400."

Early's motion was supported unanimously by Council.

At Caledon Council's April 25 meeting, the NWC was chosen as the beneficiary of Council's annual golf tournament, which was held over the summer.