

People living near Canadian Tire site still concerned about traffic

By Bill Rea

Traffic patterns around the site of the new Canadian Tire facility were on the minds last week of people living nearby, but other issues are still on the public radar.

Last Wednesday's meeting in Bolton was mainly for people who own property on the lands surrounding the facility. Canadian Tire is planning a large distribution centre and office facility on about 180 acres at the northwest corner of Coleraine Drive and Healey Road.

About 30 people were on hand for the session.

Councillor Richard Whitehead said there was a meeting for immediate property owners about two months ago, and he said they had been promised at the time there would be a second session to discuss site plan issues.

He also stressed the meeting had nothing to do with the zoning or Official Plan approvals for the development, or the Ministerial Zoning Order (MZO) that Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Linda Jeffrey issued in July to facilitate it.

He also pointed out it was not a formal public information meeting, although he said it would be possible to have a record kept of the issues raised.

Former Town councillor Ian Sinclair asked about the air vents and air conditioning installations on the roof of the facility, commenting that would be a concern. "That would be a concern for me if I lived right next door," he remarked, wondering how such noise could be directed.

Architect Glenn Pitrowski said the rooftop components will be screened, adding the noise "will not be significant."

Sinclair also raised the issue of lighting on the site, asking if it would be facing away from nearby homes.

Pitrowski said the lighting would be similar to other developments in Bolton. "We can't have light spilling beyond the property line," he said.

Local resident Kim Seipt also had concerns about noise. She commented that noise studies for the development were site-specific, adding there should be more details on the cumulative impact.

Rob Hughes, of the Town's planning department, agreed the studies were site specific, but he added they are an on-going part of the broader South Albion & Bolton Industrial Study.

Seipt wondered how council could have approved something like this without having all the studies done.

Several people at the meeting raised the issue of dealing with storm water on the site.

Whitehead, who also sits on the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), said a storm retention pond is planned for the property, adding that is part of the responsibility of the conservation authority.

A 12-acre pond is planned for the property and that is going to help with drainage and flow deficiencies from other developments.

He added this is all being done in cooperation with Canadian Tire.

Whitehead said the result will be higher quality water being discharged across Healey.

He also pointed out one of the functions of the pond will be to prevent high storm water flows downstream. The water will be discharged gradually.

One of the main points raised by people opposed to the development is the amount of trucks entering and leaving the site, and the possible health impacts from the diesel fumes.

One woman charged they are expecting about 800 trucks per day on the site, and she wondered who would be responsible if area soils get contaminated by the diesel.

Kathleen Freeman, real estate manager for Canadian Tire Real Estate Limited, was quick to say the number of trucks would be more like 350 per day, but some people in the audience were holding onto the 800 figure.

Councillor Nick deBoer pointed out Coleraine has been designed to be a truck bypass, so traffic is going to increase there anyway. The main access for employees working at the facility will be off Healey, and there were several people expressing concern that would create bottlenecks when shifts change.

Whitehead pointed out the municipality does not get involved in restricting the movements of light vehicles. But he added as the traffic numbers increase, that provides the justification to improve the roads to handle the volumes.

He also pointed out shift changes will not be at traditional peak hours. They will be in the middle of the day and late at night. He agreed that doesn't solve all the problems, but it mitigates them.

Pitrowski added the site is being designed to separate the trucks from where the employees will park.

DeBoer commented the Town always keeps track of traffic volumes and patterns. Coleraine, he added, is meant to be a limited

access road, with entrances only at specific locations, in order for it to function as part of the Bolton Arterial Road (BAR) network. One man at the meeting wondered if there could be another east-west road, north of Healey from Humber Station Road heading onto the site.

Whitehead observed the road patterns in the past have been based on the grid system established in the township days. He said as the area develops, there will likely be an alternate road connecting Healey to Mayfield Road to the south. A road north of Healey is less likely, he said, because of the Canadian Pacific Railway line.

He also said there will continue to be improvements to Healey. "It will be progressive as we go along," he remarked.