

Progress in designating road to honour veterans

By Bill Rea

Things are moving ahead with efforts to have Airport Road in Peel known as Veterans Memorial Roadway.

Peel Regional council recently agreed to appoint Caledon Councillors Johanna Downey and Jennifer Innis to 'champion' the project.

The idea was raised in the summer by then Mayor Marolyn Morrison to have a road designated as a memorial highway to honour veterans and peacekeepers. Morrison has two sons in the military who have done tours of duty in Afghanistan.

The report to Regional council from Commissioner of Public Works Dan Labrecque stated that various municipalities in Ontario have been designating certain roads to commemorate the service of veterans.

'The purpose of naming a roadway honouring veterans is to recognize and keep alive the memory, achievements and sacrifices made by those who have served and are serving Canada in the defence of freedom and who have contributed to the development of Canada as a nation,' he stated.

Airport Road was selected because it runs through all three of the municipalities in Peel (Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga).

Labrecque also reported they were looking for an arterial road with high visibility, as well as historical significance. Airport Road was named the preferred candidate, but Dixie Road, Winston Churchill Boulevard and Mississauga Road/Erin Mills Parkway were also considered.

A consultation process has started, with the Peel Art Gallery, Museum and Archives (PAMA) gathering historical information. It was determined that Airport Road has considerable historic importance. Labrecque pointed out it was the access route to Malton for thousands of Peel residents who were involved in aircraft production during the Second World War.

Various stakeholders are going to be part of the process, including the Royal Canadian Legion, veterans' groups, PAMA, representatives from council staff and the three municipalities and the public.

Labrecque said there will have to be consideration to whether the road should be given an additional name or if the existing name should be replaced. He said an additional name would be the preferred option.

Morrison, in the summer, said she was not calling for replacing the name. She was thinking more of the concept which has seen a stretch of Highway 401 become known as The Highway of Heroes. She wasn't expecting people living on the road to have to change their mailing addresses.

In his presentation to council in the summer, Labrecque agreed.

'Airport Road will always be Airport Road,' he said at the time.