

Proposed truck yard sparks community pushback

By **Riley Murphy**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A proposed truck yard sparked community pushback at a public session last week.

At last week's municipal Planning and Development Meeting, Humphries Planning Group Inc., on behalf of Giampaolo Developments, held a public meeting regarding the 13291 Airport Road property in Ward 3.

The property in question is located on the east side of Airport Road North.

The developer is currently seeking a zoning by-law amendment to permit truck and trailer parking on the property for a period of three years.

From 2022 to early 2023, the property was zoned as Prime Agricultural; in mid to late 2023, the zoning went back and forth between ?Prime Agricultural? and ?Employment Area.?

In March of 2024, the Caledon Council adopted the Future Caledon Official Plan (FCOP), and 13291 Airport Road was designated ?Prime Agricultural? in the FCOP.

Shortly after, Bill 162 reinstated some modifications to the Region of Peel Official Plan (RPOP) that were removed by Bill 150, such as 13291 Airport Road, which was designated Urban System (Employment Area) in RPOP.

In July of 2024, the Region of Peel became an upper-tier municipality without planning responsibilities, and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) became the approval authority for FCOP.

The Town of Caledon presented at the meeting that the MMAH is currently reviewing the approval of the FCOP.

Town Staff shared the FCOP will likely be modified as revised by Bill 162, and 13291 Airport Road will be redesignated to New Employment Area in FCOP.

The zoning currently in effect is Agricultural (A1) and Environmental (EPA2), which is why a temporary zoning change is required.

Residential lots and agricultural land currently surround the lot itself.

Following the Town and Humphries Planning Group Inc. presentations were multiple resident delegations.

These delegations included concerns such as ?premature planning,? safety, environmental risks, and overall effects on the lands.

Amanda Corbett from the Caledon Community Road Safety Association shared the ?ping-ponging? around the zoning leaves residents confused and unaware of the situation.

Corbett also went through the traffic study done for the lot and felt that much of it was concerning.

?The count station nearest to the subject site does not provide data from the last seven years, so that could not be used. The next nearest count station was approximately 1.5 kilometers north of Old School Road. It is noted that the 2024 Southwest data plot was inconsistent with years prior and is 40% greater than the data recorded in 2023 for Southwest. On this basis, a different calculation

was used. If the appropriate data wasn't available for the traffic assessment, shouldn't it be gathered first to properly evaluate it,? urged Corbett.

Corbett said despite this, they are thankful the developer is following the planning process.

?It's refreshing to see a temporary zoning application that's being requested prior to land alteration and truck storage happening. We thank the landowner for following the process. The residents do welcome zoning applications for truck and trailer storage in areas where it's appropriate as we want to see illegal truck yards removed and proper areas for truck and trailer storage implemented,? said Corbett. ?But given the infrastructure limitations, public safety concerns and Town of Caledon's intended plan for when these lands would be developed, this temporary zoning application seems premature and not in the public's best interest.?

Other residents, including Joanna Valeriani, raised their concerns regarding the traffic this project would cause.

?When a truck will enter or exit the yard, it will be required to make a wide turn, not only disrupting one way of traffic, but both. The road is not wide enough for vehicle traffic to go around,? said Valeriani. ?Airport Road has not been built to accommodate this type of road usage. It hasn't been expanded and we're not expecting to see that till 2031. To be blunt, this idea of a truck yard that will accommodate close to 700 trucks, 679 at the moment, is a disaster waiting to happen.?

Franca Pisani, also from CCRSA, said when they had a booth at Caledon Day, multiple residents approached them to discuss how dangerous Airport Road had become.

?Parents told us they're afraid to let their teenagers drive on it. Seniors said they avoid it entirely. Local commuters told us they experienced near misses almost every day because of the reckless traffic. These are not isolating complaints. This is a pattern of frustration and fear from residents and commuters,? said Pisani.

Councillor Doug Maskell was present when then-Minister Clark added the property to the employment lands.

He shared at that he had deep concerns in 2023 when this was first brought to his attention.

?I have serious misgivings regarding road safety and personal safety on Airport Road and very, very, very deep concerns about the environmental impact on the lands. I just don't believe that the way that road is configured right now as a two-lane road without left turning lanes and right turning lanes, should be at all contemplated at this time for this usage,? said Councillor Maskell.

He spoke to the residents' concerns about the big question of ?what happens after the temporary three years??

In response, Humphries Planning Group Inc. said the long-term plans would be for employment use.

?This use is considered a temporary use that would be complimentary as an employment use until such time as the property can be developed with full municipal services, then a new use would actually be considered,? they shared. ?What that might be at this point, we don't know.?

They shared they would have to see what happens with this application.

?Potentially, if we're successful, it's possible that another application or subsequent application could be filed and reconsidered again by the municipality.?

Councillor Christina Early, at the meeting, raised the issue that many delegated on, regarding fluid leakage with over 600 trucks parked at the lot.

?We still are cropping in the area and we do have a creek that's right there. What has been the discussion to ensure that we don't have

contamination in the land and that other wells or even the creek is affected?? asked Councillor Early.

Humphries Planning Group shared that they have noted these comments regarding the concerns.

?We have not had comments come back that have raised that issue thus far. I'm sure they will, and we will have to address them when they do.?

By the Planning Act, a Public Meeting is held for applicants to present their proposal to the public and Council, to receive comments, and to answer questions the public and members of the Council may have.

During these meetings, the Council cannot make a recommendation or decision.

Following the meeting, a Planning Report with recommendations will be brought forward by staff and considered by the Council.

These meetings allow for members of the public to have their voices heard and questions considered for the planning report that follows.

If you wish to be notified of the passing or refusal of the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment, residents must make a request to the Planning Department of the Town of Caledon, by email to planning@caledon.ca or mail to 6311 Old Church Road, Caledon, Ontario L7C 1J6.