

Protesters rally against Canadian Tire proposal

By Bill Rea

Sunday turned out to be a rather nice day for a protest march, and about 150 people were out for the demonstration at the site of the proposed Canadian Tire facility in Bolton.

Organized by the residents' group Your Voice for Bolton, the main focus of the demonstration was a Ministerial Zoning Order (MZO) that Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Linda Jeffrey issues in July to facilitate the development of the large distribution centre and office facility on about 180 acres at the northwest corner of Coleraine Drive and Healey Road.

Local resident Kim Seipt told the rally the group is calling for the MZO to be revoked, maintaining it's not too late for that to happen.

She also charged that Bolton does not have a proper community plan, and stated the public meetings that led up to Town council's approval of the development proposal in June were staged.

'They broke our trust,' she declared. 'Our council misled and misdirected us.'

'We need a referendum on this,' one man in the audience shouted out.

'Are council and the province working together against the interests of Bolton?' Seipt asked. 'Why isn't the Province enforcing its own policies related to land use planning?'

'We ask that they adhere to their own growth policies, which demand complete communities and not just trucking yards,' she added.

Seipt also said a truck depot like the one proposed belongs near a highway, not in the heart of a community.

'What makes Canadian Tire so special?' she demanded. 'Why are they permitted to skip the process and leap frog ahead?'

As well, she said she was concerned about the precedent, wondering if American or Mexican firms might have a claim for similar treatment, under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

'Why is our future being dictated by politicians who only care about re-election, instead of a vision for the future of our community?' she asked. 'Bolton is not a trucking yard. It's a community with people and we will be heard.'

Seipt later commented that the issue is now in the hands of Jeffrey, adding the group wants to get the matter before the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).

When it comes to what she wants to see on the lands in question, she said she wants 'a complete community plan.'

'Let the plan decide what's to go there through a proper community plan,' she added.

The crowd out Sunday included people from various places in Caledon, including former councillors Annette Groves and Ian Sinclair. Also on hand was Ward 1 resident Barb Shaughnessey.

'It's not just a Bolton issue,' she declared. 'It's a Caledon-wide issue. Trucking. We've got to support one another on that.'



Kim Seipt addressed the crowd at Sunday's rally at the site of the proposed massive Canadian Tire facility in Bolton.



Protesters were armed with signs at Sunday's rally, and they heard plenty of horns honking from supportive passing motorists. Photos by Bill Rea



Bolton resident Denise Goldstein thinks the Canadian Tire development should go farther south, away from homes.