

Public has not been well served in Canadian Tire process

This is the first time I have ever written to the newspaper.

I am a voice in Bolton, usually a quiet voice on the sidelines, but I feel this issue is so important my voice must be heard. I must leave my comfort zone and speak up for Bolton.

Like many people in Bolton, I selected the current mayor and representatives, but I feel I was misled. I voted for them on the pretense of moderate growth, which is what their platforms stood for. Little did I know, they only meant housing and population. A 1.5 million square foot trucking facility with 300 to 800 trucks per day is not moderate growth to me. It is the quickest way to fill a spot with no thought to alternate solutions or businesses.

The decisions were made by council long before the process was made public. E-mails were sent asking to expedite decisions because Canadian Tire threatened to move elsewhere if their time line was not met. This is the reason our mayor gives for requesting the Ministerial Zoning Order (MZO) that is rarely granted and was granted in this instance. This MZO would allow Canadian Tire to receive their building permit more quickly. The public meetings were merely procedure to our mayor and councillors. I did not speak out at the meeting, but I did attend a few of them and I saw first hand that the voices were not being listened to. At one meeting, council did not even speak or answer questions and had hired a moderator to represent them.

?What kind of political process is this?? I asked myself. It was more like a circus with the moderator as ring master and the councillors and mayor as mimes.

The final meeting was also a joke. The people of Bolton filled the seats in the chambers and required overflow seating outside in the hallway. Many people spoke and poured their hearts out and cited research and facts to unhearing ears and minds that were already made up. Councillors even had prepared 10-20 minute explanations to justify the vote they already knew they were going to make, but had not spent equal time debating the issue or seeking alternatives. I left the meeting like many, feeling that the political process is a farce, voices were unheard, not listened to, no one cared.

Is a large trucking facility in this part of Caledon the right decision? Have you looked at where this facility will be on the corner of Healey Road and Coleraine Drive? It is within walking distance of the Harvest Moon subdivision and a school. Have you looked at the current Canadian Tire depot on Steeles Avenue and Bramalea Road? It's an eye sore and it isn't within walking distance of a school or subdivision. Truck distribution centers this massive size mean air pollution, noise pollution, light pollution, busy roads, damage to roads and more truck and car collisions 24 hours a day. What is positive about this? Jobs? Remember, construction jobs go to the company who wins the bid for the job, which is not guaranteed to be a Bolton company. The current staff will maintain their jobs at the new facility and may even receive extended bus service from Brampton. Who's paying for this? If this is supposed to be a higher tech facility, some current staff may even lose their jobs. The only jobs available to those in Bolton would be through attrition or retirement.

Despite all that has happened, it is not too late. We can go to higher levels of government like our Provincial and federal representatives. We can demand Linda Jeffrey, Minister of Affairs and Municipal Housing, revoke the Ministerial Zoning Order. We can write letters, send emails, make phone calls and attend rallies.

Remember, ?You must be the change you wish to see in the world ?(Gandhi). If we join together and make sure our voices are heard, we can make a difference!

P. Capone,
Bolton