

Rally is set for Sunday to fight Canadian Tire zoning

By Bill Rea

The call is out for support this Sunday in the fight against the proposed Canadian Tire facility for the Bolton industrial area. Caledon council in June unanimously approved the proposal to place a large distribution centre and office facility on about 180 acres at the northwest corner of Coleraine Drive and Healey Road in Bolton.

At the same meeting, councillors called upon Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Linda Jeffrey to use her authority to order the land uses set out in the applications, and Peel Regional councillors went along with that request later that same week.

Jeffery ordered the zoning needed for the development to be implemented in July through a Ministerial Zoning Order (MZO).

That drew the wrath of a group calling itself Your Voice for Bolton, and they will be hosting a rally Sunday at 3 p.m. at the corner of Coleraine and Healey.

Local resident Kim Seipt was on hand at Tuesday's meeting of the SouthFields Village Residents' Group, trying to drum up support for the rally.

She told the audience the growth plans for Bolton in the Town's Official Plan have not yet been approved by the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).

She also pointed out the Canadian Tire proposal is going to generate a lot of truck traffic. There have been varying figures of exactly how many truck movements there will be per day, but Seipt pointed out they will be within 800 metres of two Bolton subdivisions.

She stressed this will be a significant increase in the local truck traffic in an area that doesn't have a highway network, and is not likely to have one for some years. That means these rigs will have to be accommodated on roads like Coleraine and Mayfield.

Seipt declared there was vocal opposition to the proposal, yet the Town approved it and Jeffrey issued the MZO.

"The public believes that is the last step," Seipt remarked, adding the community has rallied and is making an appeal to have the MZO revoked.

She also said the Province believes it's only a few people who are carrying this fight. But she also observed a lot of the opponents might have had trouble getting to public meetings held during the week, as was the case with the meetings held by the Town in the time leading up to the approval. She said the hope is these people will be able to get out for this weekend session.

"This MZO sets a precedent for any future development," Seipt commented, adding there's no precedent for doing something like that with a matter before OMB.

She also said the planning community is watching this matter closely. If such preferential treatment can be extended to one Canadian company, then others will be calling for similar breaks. She added this could be impacted by the North American Free Trade Agreement.

"There are many levels of concern for this group," she said.

The two local councillors were on hand, and they took a different view of the situation.

"I think we need a lot more of these," Gord McClure declared. "I think it's great."

Allan Thompson commented MZO is a tool that's been used lots of times, although Seipt countered it's not been used in matters before OMB.



Kim Seipt addressed the SouthFields Village Residents' Group Tuesday night.