

Region backs Dixie as Veterans Memorial Roadway

By Bill Rea

It looks like Peel Region is going to have a road dedicated to veterans, but not the one that had originally been planned.

Regional councillors last year were leaning toward designating Airport Road as Veterans Memorial Roadway. Councillors last week accepted the staff recommendation to support in principle the plan to apply the designation to Dixie Road instead.

Regional council also directed staff to hold a Public Information Centre on the matter. The time and location of the session have not yet been set.

One advantage to Dixie that was cited in the staff report that went to council is the road runs south almost to Lake Ontario. Airport Road only runs to Pearson International Airport.

Dixie stops at Old Base Line Road, and is replaced by Horseshoe Hill Road to the north. Regional council also agreed to ask the Town of Caledon to apply the designation to that road. Mayor Allan Thompson was confident that could be arranged.

The idea was put forth last year by then mayor Marolyn Morrison. It was her thought to have a memorial highway to honour veterans and peacekeepers. She has two sons in the Canadian Forces and both did tours in Afghanistan.

The staff report noted the purpose of designating 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, and who have contributed to the development of Canada as a nation.

The report also stressed there are no plans to change the name of the road, so people's addresses will not be changing. The designation will be the same basic concept applied to a stretch of Highway 410 which is also known as The Highway of Heroes. Staff reported there have been meetings with representatives of the Royal Canadian Legion, and they have been very supportive, and were part of the decision to change the designation from Airport Road to Dixie.

Councillor Jennifer Innis, who late last year had been named one of the 'political champions' of the initiative, said Dixie is in closer proximity to more Legion branches than Airport Road. She added it's closer to the Alton branch, which is now the only one in Caledon.

Innis also pointed out Airport Road barely runs south into Mississauga. 'There's more of a length that would travel through the Region of Peel,' she said, referring to Dixie.

The staff report also stated the Legion has requested there be a gateway, as well as commemorative signs along the route, and that they include the words 'We will remember them.'

There are also plans to put a poppy on the signs, with the approval of the Legion Dominion Command.

There were representatives of the Legion on hand at the regional council meeting, and Thompson made a point of telling them this type of tribute is owed to the veterans.

'We're very proud of what you do and what you've done,' he said.

'We're recognizing our veterans, and it's long overdue,' he added.

Thompson also said Morrison should get credit, since this was her initiative.

'I think it's a wonderful tribute to our veterans,' Regional Chair Frank Dale remarked.



Members of the Royal Canadian Legion were on hand for last Thursday's discussion at Regional council on designating Dixie Road

Veterans Memorial Roadway. Seen here are Marg Porter of the Port Credit branch; Jack Porter, deputy district commander; Benjamin Pearce, secretary of the Streetsville branch; Ola McNutt, deputy zone commander and president of the Streetsville branch; and Walter Stevens of the Cooksville Branch. Photo by Bill Rea