

Region holding meeting tonight on BRES

By Bill Rea

Peel Region will be hosting an initial public meeting and open house tonight (Thursday) on the proposed residential expansion in Bolton.

It will run from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Rotary Place at 7 Rotarian Way.

Regional councillors were updated on the matter last Thursday with a staff report that was received without comment.

The report stated the Town of Caledon submitted an application for a Regional Official Plan amendment (ROPA) in October 2014. The application was based on the Bolton Residential Expansion Study (BRES), which will see about 185 hectares added to the settlement. Council was told last April that work on the planning, financing and servicing of the growth area needed to be completed before a public information meeting on the proposed amendment could be held. The report added there will also have to be comments from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The issue was put before Provincial facilitation late last year, and Regional council endorsed the two-part settlement, which included the approval of a planning process for consideration of the Official Plan amendment.

?The planning process lays out a number of tasks and milestones to ensure an open, fair and transparent review of the Town of Caledon's BRES ROPA application,? the staff report stated. ?Regional staff has been working to meet the timelines set out in the planning process.?

The process has included sending out requests for written submissions from interested stakeholders. That was done in December. Mailings have gone out to about 1,000 landowners who are within 150 metres of the proposed expansion areas, as well as to about 75 public agencies and roughly 370 local community groups and agencies.

The purpose of tonight's session will be to give the public a chance to learn about and offer input on the application. There will be an open house component, as well as staff presentation, along with the question-and-answer period.

Staff reported a multi-disciplinary approach is being used to deal with the application, headed by a steering committee that has been established. As well, they said an internal project team has also been set up to provide technical expertise. Staff is also working on retaining a planning consultant to help process the ROPA application.

The staff report also stated Town staff is working on a report on the progress of the secondary planning process, and on the possibility of an environmental assessment related to BRES. The Town has been told Regional staff will not be taking part in either of these procedures.