

Regional councillors make another attempt at starting facilitation

By Bill Rea

Efforts heated up again last week at Peel Region to bring in a facilitator to address land use issues in Caledon.

Mississauga Councillor Carolyn Parrish tried to put forth a motion that Regional Chair Frank Dale ruled out of order. Parrish made an unsuccessful attempt to challenge the ruling.

While she wouldn't divulge the contents of the motion, she said it basically asked that facilitation be started.

A motion was passed at Region last month that called for facilitation, but it had stipulated that all parties involved in the appeal of the Bolton Employment Expansion Area and the Mayfield West Phase 2 Employment Expansion Area be invited to participate, and that the Town decided to participate. There was also a provision that the request of Solmar Development Corp. for party status in the appeal of the Bolton Employment Expansion be either adjourned or denied, and that the Region support the Mayfield West Phase 2 Landowners' Group for the dismissal of Solmar's appeal of the Mayfield West expansion.

A letter in last Thursday's Regional council agenda package from lawyer Michael Melling the legal firm of Davies Howe Partners stated Solmar had reached a settlement with the Mayfield West Phase 2 Landowners Group. That meant Solmar's appeal of the Regional Official Plan amendment (ROPA) dealing with the employment lands in that area was being withdrawn.

Last Thursday's Regional council meeting also included a delegation from Patrick Harrington of the legal firm of Aird and Berlis, representing Argo Caledon Developments. He commented on the Bolton Residential Expansion Study (BRES). The ROPA for that has been appealed, and Harrington said the hearing for that is not scheduled until February.

He said they support the efforts of the Town and Region to keep the employment and residential issues separate. He also said BRES is part of an ongoing public process, so including it in facilitation would not be appropriate.

Public Works Commissioner Dan Labrecque said the ROPA for BRES is not yet in the public domain.

Regional Solicitor Patrick O'Connor said Caledon council has not yet taken a position on facilitation. That's expected to take place at next week's council meeting in Caledon East.

Parrish expressed the opinion the withdraw of the Solmar appeal changed the situation from previously passed motions, so she should have been allowed to present her motion. O'Connor said the motion passed at Region in April included conditions, and one of them was the Town had to agree to take part.

Regional Clerk Kathryn Lockyer argued it involved re-opening an issue that had already been decided, requiring a two-thirds majority at the council table, and both Dale and O'Connor agreed.

Commenting later, Mayor Allan Thompson stressed the importance of keeping the process open, and he said that would be taken away with facilitation.

"The big thing is we think it's very important we keep this open and transparent," he commented.

He added such openness seemed to be missing when the Town dealt with the massive Canadian Tire development in Bolton.

"Lessons learned," he said.