

Residents upset over planned sidewalks in Belfountain

By Bill Rea

Peel Region has completed its study of the roads around Belfountain, and local residents are not very pleased with what's being recommended.

In fact, officials of Belfountain Community Organization (BCO) collected signatures on a petition over the weekend.

BCO President Jenni Le Forestier said they collected 338 signatures over the two days, and the efforts are going to continue.

The study of the roads in the area was commissioned by the Region and lasted about two years. There were a couple of public sessions as part of the study, and residents continuously made it clear there was no desire to see a lot of changes.

The study took in Bush Street and Old Main Street in the hamlet, as well as Mississauga Road to the south, Olde Base Line Road and Winston Churchill Boulevard.

The environmental study report (which takes up three large binders) addressed the road situation in the hamlet.

For Bush Street, from a spot about 150 metres east of Shaws Creek Road to Mississauga Road (Old Main Street), the recommendations call for a 9.3-metre platform semi-rural road with a 1.7-metre sidewalk on one side and a half-metre mountable curb. The recommendation for the stretch of Old Main from Bush south to Belfountain Community Centre calls for an 11.7-metre semi-rural road with a 1.7-metre sidewalk on one side and a 2.4-metre wide parking area accommodation on the other. South of the Community Centre on Mississauga Road to Caledon Mountain Drive, the recommendations call for a 9.3-metre road with a 1.7-metre paved shoulder on one side.

There are no sidewalks or other formal off-road pedestrian facilities along the study area roads, the report stated. Pedestrian activity is centred in the community of Belfountain, where the majority of commercial establishments and residences in the area are located.

The petition BCO circulated over the weekend was addressed to the Ontario Legislature, and called upon the government to uphold and enforce relevant legislation and the mandates of the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Town of Caledon, the (Niagara Escarpment Commission), and (Credit Valley Conservation) to protect the water, environment, and heritage character of the Hamlet of Belfountain and environs.

We're getting all of our ducks in a row, Le Forestier commented last week. We are quite concerned about how this could severely impact Belfountain.

This whole project was supposed to be for students going to Belfountain School and the Conservation Area, she added.

Le Forestier pointed out students going to the school are bused, and the proposed sidewalks don't go anywhere near Belfountain Conservation Area.

She also said the report does not address such issues as culverts, or six endangered species that are in the area.

She also said last week the residents were working on an appeal to the Ministry of the Environment. The necessary documents had to be filed by Tuesday this week (July 29).

From then, we see if the decision is a 'yea' or a 'nay,' she said. From there, we have to decide what our next steps will be.

Le Forestier pointed out a lot of tourists travel to Belfountain to take in the natural area landscape, along with other attractions.

We don't think this Regional road project is taking into account any of those things, she said.