

Several alternatives to deal with drainage in Alton

By Bill Rea

Storm drainage conditions in Alton are currently being studied, but there are concerns the focus is too narrow.

The Town of Caledon and consultants hosted a public information centre (PIC) last week at the Library in Alton.

The purpose of the PIC was to present some details of the study method being employed and to gain feedback involving the drainage conditions in the Alton Estates subdivision.

The study area is bordered by Queen Street, Emeline Street, the rear of properties on the south side of McClellan Road and Agnes Street. Information provided at the session stated the study, which has been initiated by the Town, is looking to address flooding issues in the subdivision, as well as addressing sediment that is getting into the Alton Mill pond from the development to the south. There have been a number of alternative suggestions to deal with the issue, and project manager Keith Pratt said there have been no favoured option named yet.

But there were concerns that lands east of Main Street aren't included in the study, although there are drainage issues there as well, according to at least one resident who was at the CIP.

'We have gravel running down our paved street,' Arlene Peavoy observed, adding a sweeper had been by to clean it up a couple of weeks before, but it was back in the middle of the street. 'I was just flabbergasted to come here and see we're not even on the map.' She said roads like Edmund, Charles and Caledon Streets don't seem to be included in the study, and she argued they should be. Pratt said they were welcoming such input.

'Maybe we can look into these problems,' he said.

The Town and consultants have stated the drainage for the subdivision depends on a number of rear-yard surface swales which can generally be subject to encroachment, through such things as fences, gardens, pools, equipment, sheds, etc. It was also noted the on-road catch basins are in some cases too far apart, according to the Town's current standards. The standard is generally 70 to 90 metres, but there are cases where there's separation by as much as 150 metres. As well, it was noted that much of the drainage off Queen Street runs downstream of the mill pond, as opposed to into the pond itself.

The various improvement alternatives that have been discussed include reconfiguring the intersection of Queen and Emeline to get rid of low points in the road and reduce the chances of ponding or flooding; having a denser tree canopy to intercept rainfall and allowing the roots to absorb more water; installing larger pipes under Agnes so they can collect more water; putting storm sewers in the rear yard easement to capture more runoff and reduce flooding and ponding in backyards; installing infiltration trenches on public right-of-ways; putting in storm sewers on Davis and Dodds Drives to reduce the flooding on Agnes.

Pratt also said some combination of the various alternatives would likely be effective. He added the base of bedrock there limits what can be done with storm sewers.

'It's still early in the process,' David Arseneau, a consultant with GHD Limited, commented, adding they need to look over the benefits and cost of all the alternatives.