

SouthFields residents hope something can be done about plant

By Bill Rea

Members of the SouthFields Village Residents' Group are getting some legal advice for dealing with the Monarch Plastics development.

Monarch Plastics Ltd. (MPL) is planning to build a large factory in the area, and since the project does not involve a rezoning or amendment to Caledon's Official Plan, there's really no prescribed mechanism for gathering public input. It will be about 316,000 square feet and will manufacture plastic bottles of various types. The bottles will be transported to various locations to be filled. No filling will take place at the plant. The process at the plant will take inert plastic pellets and form them into bottles.

The plant is slated to go on the north side of Highway 410 near Kennedy Road, south of Abbotside Way.

The issue came up at last Thursday's meeting of the residents' group.

Eddie Garland told the crowd the residents formed a task force in light of the last meeting of the group, which took place in November. At that time, there were some details offered by representatives of the company, and it was clear a lot of residents were hearing about it for the first time.

Garland said there have been a number of meetings since the task force was formed.

"We were repeatedly told there was nothing we could do," he said. "It's a done deal."

But he also said the group pooled their funds and met with lawyers from the firm Willms and Shier, and they have said there are still public avenues available.

Garland told the meeting this proposed new facility will require environmental certification from the Ministry of the Environment, and that would involve the possibility of appeal. He said the company has to go through this process before the plant can open and operate.

Further action involving lawyers will come at a cost, Garland warned, telling the group there will be fund-raising efforts.

He pointed out the lands being eyed for the plant were zoned for industrial before any of the nearby houses were built. He added the task force has been looking into ways to tighten the definitions of prestige industrial.

"We're not looking to get into any legal battles," he said, adding they're trying to follow the processes that are available to them.