

Things that don't take a vacation

by SHERALYN ROMAN

Summer is often considered a quiet time. Not because no one is doing anything, or because nothing is happening; in fact often it's quite the opposite. One of the reasons it's considered quiet, however, is because we tend not to hear quite as much from our provincial and federal politicians. As well, lots of people, (at least those with the means to do so) head out to spend time camping, cottaging, touring and travelling. In a strange coincidence, many of those same people are politicians! But you know what doesn't take a vacation? Illegal trucking, illegal event spaces AND Doug Ford's ineptitude.

Thankfully, at least our municipal politicians appear to be making an effort to work through the summer months. Most of our Councillors (and the Mayor) are making appearances around town at special events like Caledon Day, Cheltenham Day, Ribfest, the Canada Day Strawberry Festival, Bolton's Midnight Madness and others.

As well, and perhaps more importantly, they're delegating. After receiving an audience with the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy, Council delegates spoke to the concerns mentioned above with the hopes of securing support for the illegal land use crisis we face here in Caledon. Additionally, happening right now, many of these same Councillors are also attending AMO - the Association of Municipalities of Ontario meeting, this year taking place in Ottawa where, presumably, there is plenty of event space available to meet - what with federal politicians being long gone.

Federally, the government is taking a 'short' break, having left the parliament building June 19 and scheduled to return September 16. On the other hand, the Ontario provincial legislature rose (in other words, stopped working) on June 6 of this year and they don't return until October 21! Unlike the two weeks' vacation most of us regular 'folks' get, that's a more than four-month break! Good gravy, who is running the province?

Back to delegating. Mayor Groves, assisted by staff and several members of Council, including Tony Rosa and Doug Maskell, spoke about 'a lot of illegal land uses happening in our town,' stating, 'it's very disruptive to our residents in the area.' On the table for discussion were both illegal trucking/parking, and also, illegal event spaces, which are popping up at an alarming rate all over our community. Speaking of alarming, just recently, two persons were shot while attending an event at one such location. With so many politicians and staffers out for summer break, let's hope the government will at least read the Hansard minutes because Caledon's delegation was asking for more help in the form of legislation that gives more 'teeth' to the actions we can take at the local level to dissuade these illegal operators.

Currently, any action Caledon can take is quite limited, and according to Catherine McLean, Commissioner of Community and Human Services, such actions, 'are being met with defiance, (as) many operators consider legal fees and municipal fines a cost of doing business.'

McLean went on to state the magnitude of these issues locally. 'In Caledon, this looks like illegal event centres, as well as parking and storage of tractor-trailers and other commercial vehicles?two different land uses with very similar impacts to our residents: long-term environmental and infrastructure damage, risks to public safety and disruption to residential communities, to name a few.'

If people are getting shot, and at least one illegal trucking firm has been tying up the Town in court proceedings since 2007, 'public safety and disruption' is an understatement. Not to mention, according to Mayor Groves, area roads are also feeling the impact of such actions, with a staggering rise in fatal collisions on both Highway #50 and Highway #10. Caledon Council and our Mayor need all the help they can get to address these significant concerns.

Let's hope our municipal team is equally able to get this message heard while attending AMO.

Let's hope that at least a few provincial party members, MPPs and perhaps even the Premier himself will be in attendance long

enough to hear about the impact his massive growth plans are having on our town. Then, let's hope when Ontario MPPs get back to work ? AFTER THANKSGIVING ? Caledon might start to see results in terms of changes that will give our municipality, our bylaw officers and even the OPP, more ?teeth? when it comes to dealing with illegal land usage. That's a whole lot of hoping on an issue that hasn't ever taken a vacation, and in case you need to hear this Mr. Ford, it's not something that a veterinarian can step in and help us with either.