

Town agrees to take part in facilitation

By Bill Rea

The Town is going to take part in the facilitation over land use issues in Bolton, but there are some conditions.

Caledon councillors had previously refused to go along with the facilitation, even after Peel Region agreed to take part, over the objections from Caledon.

The motion passed at Regional council in June called for Regional staff and solicitors to take part in the facilitation regarding Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 28, dealing with the Bolton Employment Expansion Area. There was enough support from Brampton and Mississauga to overcome Caledon's objections

The motion passed by Town council Tuesday reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring that land use planning in Caledon stay under the control of the Town.

Tuesday's motion, which was moved by Councillor Jennifer Innis and seconded by Nick deBoer, reiterated the Town's objective to protect its own ability to make planning decisions. But it also noted that the Region has entered into facilitation, and there was no party representing the Town's interests, and that the Town has started legal proceedings to quash the Region's decision to take part in facilitation.

Council agreed that the Town will take part in the facilitation "without prejudice," provided the facilitation is limited to the appeal of ROPA?28 launched by Your Voice for Bolton Inc., and that the Town has not abandoned its attempts to get the Regional motion from June quashed.

Council passed the motion after a closed session of approximately two hours.

Several of the councillors reflected that the Town had previously refused to take part in the facilitation. But Mayor Allan Thompson was among those who observed the risks to the municipality would be greater if the Town is not represented.

"Caledon council remains committed to the principle that planning in Caledon should be done by Caledon," Thompson commented.

"That's how it's always been, That's how the Peel Region Official Plan says it should be, and that's how it works best."

Councillor Annette Groves spoke of the importance of keeping Caledon planning at the local level, adding that's how it's done in Peel.

DeBoer observed there was a full public process involved in ROPA?28.

"We've got ourselves pushed back into a corner," he commented, also wondering what might have happened if Caledon and Brampton councillors ganged up on Mississauga in this fashion. "There would be a pretty good glow in the sky, I would think."

Innis commented on the need to protect the interests of current and future Caledon residents. She added the Town needs to be represented at the table to demonstrate how well Caledon does its planning. She said she wasn't happy with the motion, even though she moved it.

"Planning should be open and transparent," she commented. "The facilitation is inappropriate. It shouldn't be happening at all. Until then, we have to ensure our residents are represented at the table."

Councillor Rob Mezzapelli observed that this will give staff a chance to defend the good planning decisions that were made in Caledon.

"I think it's important that Caledon stand up for itself," Councillor Gord McClure remarked.

"It's with a heavy heart I'm supporting it today," Councillor Barb Shaughnessy said, commenting on the "bullying tactics" of the "two Liberal mayors to the south."

"We have to stand behind our planners," she declared. "We've done a great job."

"I think we've got a great fight on our hands at the court level," she added.

Councillor Doug Beffort agreed this will allow for the chance to show the professionalism of the work done in Caledon.

Thompson was also appreciative of the work done by staff. "It's like sending the cavalry in," he said.