

Town approves \$100,000 budget for Business Improvement Area

By Bill Rea

The Bolton Business Improvement Area (BIA) is planning to spend an additional \$22,000 this year.

Caledon council recently approved the 2013 budget for the BIA, calling for \$100,000 in spending, or a 28.2 per cent increase over last year's budget of \$78,000.

The amount collected through tax levies is not slated to change, however. That's where the \$78,000 is to come from. The staff report to council stated there was a surplus in the BIA's operations last year of \$20,000, and that will be used to help fund this year's activities. The other \$2,000 will be coming from general revenues from various activities held during the year.

The staff report stated the tax levy is paid by the individual businesses in the Bolton core, and ranges \$250 to \$2,000.

The Town has budgeted collecting the \$78,000 in four installments of \$19,500. The first was due earlier this month, and the others will be collected in May, July and September. The staff report stated the payment schedule has been based on discussions with the BIA and is thought to be beneficial to its cash-flow needs.

The main spending increase in this year's budget is for events. Last year's budget set aside \$26,000 for that, and this year's calls for \$40,000. As well, the BIA proposes to spend an additional \$2,000 on flowers, \$1,000 more on watering and maintenance, another \$2,000 to replace, install and remove banners, an additional \$1,000 for marketing and \$3,000 is being set aside for Remembrance Day observances. The budget for seasonal decorations is being cut from \$5,000 to \$4,000.

Councillor Richard Whitehead wondered about efforts to expand the BIA to the businesses on Bolton's south hill, or if it made more sense to create another BIA.

Town CAO Doug Barnes said the matter is being looked at, but he added the real desire is to make the current BIA more effective with a greater role before expanding it.

Whitehead commented on the need for a BIA to make the streetfront on the south hill more appealing, especially since the Bolton Arterial Road (BAR) is due to be completed. He added a lot of good work has been over the last couple of years to make the valley look "spectacular."

Councillor Patti Foley agreed, adding there might be more talk soon about expansion or another BIA.

Mayor Marolyn Morrison commented on the need to inform the BIA how impressed council is with the work it's done. A lot of volunteer hours have been contributed. "It's really paying off," she declared.

Councillor Nick deBoer commented the success has been due to the board of directors, adding this might be the time to encourage expansion.