

Town asked to consider other lands for expansion

By Bill Rea

Caledon council last year picked lands on the west of Bolton for village expansion, and neighbouring land owners are lobbying to be included.

Consultants representing Flato Developments Inc. appeared before council last week.

Michael Gagnon told councillors they weren't hoping to get anything approved right then, but were interested in adding to the process, and he hoped to have a meeting with municipal staff soon.

There's an obligation on the Town to have Bolton grow by 190 hectares to comply with the Provincial growth plans. Six areas were considered as options, and the one recommended by the Town's consultants is on Humber Station Road, between the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks and The Gore Road, north of King Street, also known as Go Station Focus option.

Gagnon told councillors Flato has been building developments around the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The company has 50 acres straddling Humber Station (most of it on the west side), just east of the lands being eyes right now. He said including these lands in the project would provide an opportunity to create a true 'western gateway' into Bolton. There was also an argument that it would represent a logical expansion of the current built-up area.

Gagnon also said including these lands would provide a more balanced approach than what's currently being proposed.

He also cited 13 criteria set out by staff for deciding where the expansion should take place, and he said this idea would fit in with them. The criteria included logical extension of the current built-up area, supporting future urban structure, being compatible with adjacent farms, being accessible by major roads, ease of infrastructure upgrades, being able to benefit from existing and planned facilities and infrastructure, etc.

Gagnon observed it's the Province that dictates the numbers the Town has to work with, and he also pointed out the Province is likely to put an east-west highway through the area. He urged councillors to take their direction from the Province and make the best community possible.

The lands in question have residential development nearby, as well as commercial areas to the south.

He argued the idea has lots of merit, stating it represents a logical extension to the built-up area, it can be easily integrated with natural heritage features, provides an opportunity to continue expanding the community to the west along King Street, it doesn't present complications with other planning studies like the GTA West Corridor, it's close to existing or proposed employment areas, it can accommodate environmental features, can be connected with several major roads, supports future public transit, etc.

Councillor Rob Mezzapelli was pleased to see efforts to expand discussions on this issue.

'I am looking to have more conversation,' he said.

Councillor Patti Foley liked the idea of mixed commercial space being used as a buffer, but Mezzapelli didn't want it to have a negative impact on existing commercial operations.

Councillor Richard Whitehead stressed the importance of understanding what will happen if the proposed GO Station goes into the area. He said the catchment area of that station will mean a huge number of commuters' cars will have to be parked there. He said 30 acres will not be enough.