

Town gets input on employments lands in Bolton

By Bill Rea

The Town is working on getting two plots of land in Bolton classified for employment, and last Wednesday was the time for public input.

One point that was raised a couple of times at last week's public information involved some confusion that the two areas are some distance apart. One is on the north hill of the village, at the northeast corner of Regional Road 50 and Columbia Way. The other is a much larger parcel that takes in most of the west side of Coleraine Drive in the southern part of Bolton. Some people wondered why they weren't being treated as separate matters.

Marisa Williams, senior policy planner with the Town, said the purpose of the meeting was to present the necessary proposed amendment to Caledon's Official Plan to the public, and to get input. She also said this is part of what has been a lengthy process which started some 10 years ago with the commencement of work on the South Albion Bolton Community Plan. The work has involved a Bolton Commercial Policy Review, Employment Land Needs Study, an expansion study for the village, etc. Williams said Town staff was directed by Caledon council in 2009 to find preferred locations for additional employment lands, and council approved their recommendations in November that year. Expanding the settlement boundaries required a comprehensive review, she said.

Williams told the meeting a number of other studies were part of this project, looking into such matters as environmental, transportation and agricultural impacts.

She also said there are a number of goals related to this work, with most of them relating to what's already called for in the Official Plan. One of them is to provide for a mix of high-quality employment uses to increase the Town's industrial and commercial assessment, provide for logical and orderly development on full municipal services, and ensure a high standard of community design along all arterial roads. Protecting significant environmental features and putting retail operation in the north hill area are among the goals too.

There are certain environmental features in and around the Coleraine lands, and Williams said there are also provisions for a storm water management pond. The lands have also been set aside for both prestige and general industrial development.

She added the boundaries of the natural areas need more refinement and that will be taking place at future planning stages. There are also provisions to extend some existing east-west roads east of Coleraine into these lands. As well, she said the Town will be encouraging eco-business principles in the development of the site.

In total, the Coleraine lands will see about 485 acres set aside for industrial development. The lands have also been set aside for both prestige and general industrial development.

The north hill lands consist of about eight acres. The plan is for it to include about 40,000 square feet for a supermarket type of development, as well as another 20,000 for associated retail uses.

In terms of municipal services, Williams said there are ideas for a road network within the Coleraine lands, but they are just conceptual at this point. Other services will include sanitary and storm sewers, municipal water, hydro, etc.

There will also be provisions to encourage active transportation.

Williams said prestige industrial will mean campus-style development. Open storage adjacent to Coleraine, Healey and Mayfield Roads will be discouraged.

Former Town councillor Ian Sinclair observed the current conceptual plans call for one storm water management pond north of Healey. He said water flows in that area head south, adding there would be other facilities in place farther to the south.

Williams told him that would be considered in the next stage of the planning process, adding a lot will depend on the configuration of development south of Healey.

Sinclair also pointed to the landscaping features at the nearby Husky Injection Molding Systems site. He said it's like a natural forest feature which is appealing to look at from Queen Street, and wondered if that had been considered for these lands.

He also wondered about the plans for the north hill lands, commenting it's 'astounding that anyone has found the need for more supermarkets in Bolton at this time.'

Williams told him she was not aware of any company showing interest in setting up a store there, but said retail commercial studies identified a justifiable need for such development.

There were also some questions about the process. Sinclair argued boundaries in Bolton were being proposed for expansion to accommodate something that had already been approved.

Director of Development Approval and Planning Policy Mary Hall said expansion of the employment lands south to Mayfield Road

and west of Coleraine has always been part of the plan. "We're just following through on something we already did," she said. Planning consultant Alan Young, representing the owners of the lands on the north hill, said his clients are anxious for things to progress. He said they have not secured a tenant for the site because of the lack of planning status there. He also said he didn't understand why these lands are tied to the Coleraine site.

Hall said the exercise includes doing studies for both sites, adding things can be split if it becomes necessary.

Williams told Councillor Nick deBoer the process has been part of one to amend Peel Region's Official Plan. Since the results of that are not yet known she said it was probably best to keep considering both lands together.

Young also said there are few problems with the 40,000 square feet being set aside for the supermarket, but he was less comfortable with 20,000 square feet being assigned for the related retail. He said he didn't want to "hamstring" the size of that retail area.

David Butler of The Butler Group said the commercial policy review of 2007 included all of Bolton. The biggest concern raised at the time involved downtown Bolton merchants. The 20,000 square foot cap was put in place to satisfy them, he said.

Local resident Sherry Brioschi observed the Province's Places to Grow documents call for complete communities coming from boundary expansions. Williams told her that to accommodate that, they need a certain amount of employment lands.

She added the current process includes amending the Official Plan to include certain lands to classify them. Mayor Marolyn

Morrison added it's required under the Planning Act.

She added Town council voted unanimously to have the lands classified for employment in 2009, but the public meeting couldn't be held until the matter had gone to Peel Region.

"It's a bit weird," Brioschi remarked.

Williams told Councillor Rob Mezzapelli the development proposed for the west side of Coleraine will generally be comparable with that on the east.

Hall told him a 40,000 square foot store would be about two-thirds the size of the Zehrs store in Bolton.