

## **Town says harassment, abuse directed towards employees is increasing]**

**By Zachary Roman**

The Town of Caledon has issued a notice that harassment towards its employees is on the rise.

On March 6, the Town said in a media release that the safety of its employees is going to be top priority. The Town said it's seeing an increase in situations where its roads and customer service staff are being harassed, abused and assaulted while working.

'This weekend there were multiple incidents, in one case the OPP was contacted,' said the Town in a statement, referring to the weekend of March 4 and 5.

The Town of Caledon issued warnings on Thursday, March 2 about the large snowfall that came on Friday, March 3.

'Messages included information about the storm, road clearing time estimates and a request for patience as Caledon is so geographically large,' reads the Town release.

However, the Town said it saw incidents beyond even rude gestures and verbal abuse as staff worked after the storm.

'Staff are now being physically threatened, in some cases objects are being hurled at trucks, sidewalk plows and at staff directly,' according to the Town.

Caledon's chief administrative officer, Carey Herd, said the safety of Town staff will not be compromised. 'We realize most citizens have been patient, however, instances of harassment toward staff have increased both in frequency and severity throughout the winter,' said Herd.

Caledon's Police Chief, Inspector MaryLouise Kearns, said threats to public safety will not be tolerated and that charges will be laid when necessary.

'Violence toward individuals trying to do their job to the best of their ability is unacceptable,' said Kearns.

Mayor Annette Groves said she knows Caledon is 'better than that.'

'These employees work long hours, during nights and weekends, working around obstacles including street-parked vehicles, to clear roads and sidewalks in a priority sequence,' said Groves. 'They shouldn't have to endure threats and abuse.'

Groves said Town employees are not only public service providers but members of the community too. She emphasized that Town employees should be able to carry out their duties in a safe work environment that is free from harassment and abuse.