

Town still behind marijuana facility, despite misgivings

By Bill Rea

The Town is still backing a proposal to create medicinal marijuana production facility in northern part of Town.

Caledon council Tuesday night voted to ratify the decision made at committee earlier this month to approve the rezoning for the property on the east side of Highway 10, south of Highpoint Sideroad, but not after hearing some misgivings, including from Councillor Barb Shaughnessy.

The approval of the proposal from White Sova Holdings was granted on the advice of Town staff. But council Tuesday night also heard from local resident Daniel Raposo, who expressed various concerns.

He was worried about safety issues, including the traffic situation on Highway 10, and he also expressed surprise that the Town's fire department raised no issues when the matter was discussed earlier in the month.

Raposo also wondered about chemicals to be used in the process and how they will be stored, adding he hoped council had considered the possible environmental impacts. He was particularly concerned about what might happen if there was a lengthy power failure in the area.

He suggested the support of the facility needed to be reconsidered, with the operation aimed to an area where there are no homes to be impacted, and where it can be more closely monitored.

As well, Raposo pointed out the Town is trying to attract tourist traffic to the area, and he didn't think a marijuana production facility would compliment that, commenting it sends out the wrong message.

"There's just a lot of love and hard work in the community," he remarked, wondering why such a facility is needed there.

Manager of Development West Robert Hughes told Councillor Annette Groves the plan is to contain the operation in a building on site. While it's not really an industrial building, he stressed it's not a residence either.

He also pointed out it's on Highway 10, meaning the Ministry of Transportation will be monitoring traffic in the area.

When it comes to air quality, Hughes said federal officials will have a role, since there are federal guidelines for an operation such as this, and there will be approvals that have to be given.

Things will be highly regulated, he asserted.

Groves observed there are operations like this in her Bolton ward.

"I've never had any complaints there," she remarked, adding the fire department regularly looks into them.

Shaughnessy agreed there are federal regulations, but she wondered if there will be any monitoring of air or water quality once the facility is running.

"It's self monitoring," she remarked, pointing out there are regulations governing aggregate operations, but no on-going monitoring.

"There's nobody going to be monitoring it."