

## Town voicing opposition to sale of Hydro One

By Bill Rea

The town is joining with other municipalities in calling on the province to stop plans to sell off Hydro One.

The plan to sell part of the utility was announced in the Provincial budget earlier this year.

Caledon councillors Tuesday passed a resolution calling on the Provincial government to halt the sale of any part of Hydro One, and maintain Hydro One as a public asset for the benefit of All Ontarians.

The motion also called on the Province to respect the autonomy and local decision-making powers of distribution companies by not forcing them into mergers or sales.

The preamble to the motion stated the public electricity system in Ontario is a critical asset to the economy and vital to the living standard and well-being of all Ontarians.

It also stressed the need that the utility remain in public control, citing experiences in other jurisdictions that indicate privatization can mean greater costs for consumers.

As well, the motion warned that a privatized Hydro One will not be subject to the scrutiny of such officials as the Auditor General, Ombudsman, Financial Accountability Officer or Integrity Commissioner. It also stated the government has no mandate from the voters to sell any part of the utility.

There was no opposition at the council table to the intent of the motion, but Councillor Rob Mezzapelli had some problems with the timing. It was not on Tuesday's agenda, coming up as a matter of urgent business.

Councillor Nick deBoer, who moved it, said a number of other municipalities have already take such stands, and that the Province is moving forward with the sale.

"I think we have to add our voice," deBoer commented.

Mezzapelli was concerned that he wasn't given more time to study the issue, adding he likes to have all the facts to go over before he makes a decision. He also said he had no way of knowing then and there that all the points made in the preamble were correct.

But other councillors were ready to take the action.

Councillor Annette Groves thanked deBoer for bringing it forward, stating the Province has been told municipalities are not in favour of this plan. She said Premier Kathleen Wynne spoke at the recent meeting of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), and representatives of 44 municipalities made their opposition clear.

Groves was also not pleased with the idea of privatization.

"Take a look at the 407," she said. "Your fees have skyrocketed. There are no controls on it."

She also said the Wynne had stated proceeds from the sale will cover infrastructure issues.

"Once the money is gone, it's gone," Groves said.

Councillor Doug Beffort said his concern was with seniors. He said most seniors' housing is heated by electricity, so fee increases would be at the mercy of private corporations.

The motion called for copies of the resolution to be distributed to the Premier, Minister of Finance, Minister of Energy, area MPPs and AMO. Councillor Jennifer Innis wanted that list expanded to include Peel Region and all MPPs in Peel.