

Town seeks public's views on cell towers

By **LISA TALLYN**
Staff Writer

The Town is looking for input from the public on changes it's proposing to how it deals with telecommunications tower applications in Halton Hills.

About 10 residents came out to learn about the changes and share their views at a recent public open house at the Civic Centre.

Kelly Patzer, Town of Halton Hills planning technician, said the changes are being made to the Town's protocol to bring it in line with Industry Canada and at council's request due to concerns raised by residents. The Town also wants to hear from the public about its preferences on tower aesthetics, location, etc.

Patzer said some of the proposed changes are:

- A clear definition of the subject site as encompassing only the tower compound and not the entire subject property

- A mail circulation distance in the settlement areas specified as 120 metres from the subject site, and now including "or three times the tower height, whichever distance is greater" and also including all properties abutting the property on which the proposed tower is located.

- The exemption for an increase in tower height of 25 per cent or less to one time only.

- Updated review process timeframes of 120 days for major proposals and 90 days for minor proposals.

- The policy that proposed telecommunications facilities within residential/mixed use Designated Greenfield Areas (eg. Georgetown expansion areas) will not be supported by the Town until Secondary Plan reviews are finalized.

- The addition of preferred aesthetic designs including:

- stealth and monopole designs in close proximity to residential areas

- tower designs which mimic other infrastructure such as light standards or those that can be incorporated into new buildings

- new equipment shelters requiring architectural and design treatments compatible to the surrounding community.

Patzer said telecommunication facilities fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government and are regulated by Industry Canada. Local, regional and planning documents don't apply, however the Region, Town and Province acknowledge the potential for land use impacts from utility and telecommunication facilities and have policies outlining preferred locations and design measures for the structures.

Patzer explained some antenna systems are exempt from municipal consultation by Industry Canada and outlined Industry Canada concerns it considers not relevant. They are disputes with members of the public relating to the proponent's service, but unrelated to antenna installations, potential effects a proposed system will have on property values or municipal taxes, and questions whether the Radiocommunication Act, Industry Canada's regulations, Safety Code 6, are valid or local bylaws or other legislation are valid or should be reformed.

Resident Erik Kowal raised a concern about strobe lighting on towers and requested the town limit nighttime strobe lighting on towers instead having them go to regular aviation lighting for night.

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Kelly Patzer, Town of Halton Hills planning technician, explains changes proposed to the Town's Telecommunications Tower Protocol at a recent public open house at the Civic Centre.

Photo by Lisa Tallyn

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