

Neighbours crowd Town Hall to lobby for growth protection

By IRENE GENTLE

The Champion

It was standing room only at Town council chambers as residents crammed in to have their say during last week's public meeting on five proposed subdivisions.

They called for noise barriers and road improvements to ease the potential growing pains of new development.

Compact, medium density growth built around neighborhood centres containing schools and parks is likely the way of the future, explained Town planning director Mel Iovio.

Medium density is considered to be about 35 units per hectare.

That means the new lots will be packed in tighter than Milton's current neighborhoods.

But upcoming growth will not be able to mirror current neighborhoods, said Mr. Iovio.

"It is going to be different from our existing community, there is no doubt about that," he said. "But markets are different and affordability is different."

The new subdivisions would be part of phase one of Milton's growth. That is expected to bring 6,200 homes and 500-700 acres of employment lands to the east of the existing urban area.

Road improvements should begin before the growth swells traffic headaches, said nearby resident Greg Snow.

"I've heard no comment on making road improvements to roads that are already there," he told committee.

"Let's not put the horse before the barn.

Let's put the barn first."

But those improvements can only be done when the traffic warrants it, responded Mr. Iovio.

"We know the condition of the surrounding roads is inadequate," he said. "Roads will be reconstructed as traffic demands it."

That didn't satisfy Mr. Snow, who felt the approach would give residents too little, too late.

"What this gentleman just said is 'we will wait until there is a problem before we fix it,' " he said. "I think we should be looking at fixing the roads before we end up with serious problems."

Resident J.R. Williams worried about the possibility of big box commercial development — such as a Canadian Tire or Home Depot — opening up in an area that could be accessed only through residential roads Woodward Road or Maple Avenue.

Big box development should not be introduced near Milton's existing neighborhoods, said resident Dave McNamara.

Such development will likely be allowable within at least one of the proposed subdivisions, according to preliminary developer plans.

"I'd ask that councillors be considerate to residents who already live there," he said.

Milton will risk turning into another Mississauga or Brampton if that kind of development comes in, said Mr. McNamara.

"That is what everyone sees and we are not impressed," he added, earning a round

of applause from the crowd.

But big box development is not likely to make many inroads in Milton, said the Town's coordinator of development services Anne Bouck.

"We are really not expecting a lot of big box people pounding down our door," she said.

"But we did want to direct those uses if they were to come to Town."

Some residents worried that increased traffic would heighten noise levels in the

• see RAISE on page 14

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