

Proposed zoning bylaw has some residents up in arms

By **JASON MISNER**
The Champion

Before buying their Milton home on Hwy. 25 north of Hwy. 401, Kelly Dennis says she and her husband asked the Town if they were allowed to build a snowmobile dealership/repair facility on the site if they so chose.

Understanding they could, the couple happily bought the half-acre land in January two years ago.

But this past July, a discouraged Ms Dennis said she was informed by the Town their property is in line for a zoning change, meaning they wouldn't be permitted to put up those buildings. She said that's not fair and is urging the Town to reconsider.

"We would not have bought that property — never, never, never — knowing this would happen," Ms Dennis said in an interview following a public meeting held during the September 15 administration and planning committee meeting. "It was the only reason we bought the property."

Ms Dennis was one of a handful of individuals who aired their concerns and frustrations at the meeting over a proposed comprehensive zoning bylaw. It's one of the most important pieces of legislation the Town has dealt with in

years. The zoning bylaw will go before town council for an official vote next month.

Zoning bylaws are an integral part of how a municipality sets out its growth by determining land uses and the types of buildings that can be constructed on a site.

The aim is to bring Milton's current zoning bylaws, which were last revised as a complete piece of legislation in 1986, in line with its Official Plan (OP), the major document that sets out a long-term vision for a municipality's future.

The OP was last reviewed in 1997 and will be reviewed again next year.

The Town held three open houses in April that saw more than 160 people attend. Staff also received more than 70 written submissions from residents wanting their zoning concerns addressed as quickly as possible.

"We made a conscious effort to resolve every possible issue we could," Nick McDonald, a consultant hired by the Town to help craft the zoning bylaw, told councillors.

The intent is to create a "well-thought and defensible" bylaw that can withstand legal challenges, he said.

The Town has responded to every question but will attempt to

resolve some outstanding issues before politicians vote on it next month.

One of the more contentious aspects of the bylaw is greenlands designation. The Town wants "to protect as much as we have left of the natural heritage system," Mr. McDonald said.

Howard Mott, a lawyer representing the Ontario Renaissance Festival among other groups, expressed concern to the committee about a possible greenlands designation that could impact the festival. The festival is located north of Britannia Road, south of Derry Road.

In an interview Mr. Mott said festival participants might want to erect different features and attractions to enhance the activities and there is worry the designation could prevent those kinds of additions.

Town staff have been working for two years to craft a complete and unified zoning bylaw. The reason for the delay has been mostly due to the Town's rapid growth in recent years. Currently zoning bylaws are revised on a case-by-case basis.

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