

Canadian Tire plans clear hurdle amid resident concerns

By Brock Weir

Plans to reconfigure the former Canadian Tire site on Yonge Street at Murray Drive to allow for more retail and restaurant space cleared a Council hurdle last week amid noise and traffic concerns from nearby residents.

Council approved a zoning bylaw amendment paving the way for additional commercial uses at the vacant big box store that would allow Canadian Tire to subdivide the existing building for multiple retail units, which they plan to lease to tenants. The building has been vacant since 2016 after the business moved to the Bayview Avenue corridor.

The zoning bylaw amendment will also allow for a proposed restaurant with drive-thru near the property's Yonge Street frontage.

All plans will be subject to a further site plan review.

Council's approval followed a delegation by area resident Gord de Bruin who shared several concerns on behalf of himself and his neighbours.

?Most of the residents aren't in disagreement to have something put there; obviously it is going to be better for the community and the Town of Aurora to have a store going in there versus an empty spot, but we do have a couple of concerns,? he told Council, leading with a proposed reconfigured loading dock he said would interfere with area traffic and potentially lead to noise concerns from houses on the west side of the property.

?Obviously there is the noise level and depending on what time they have shipping and receiving. I know the road there is already in quite a bit of disarray, and then you have much more truck traffic going through and that is going to make things a little bit more difficult, too.

?The other thing we have an issue with potentially is the restaurant. Having a restaurant already there, we have noticed a rodent issue in our community which isn't very nice. I have been there since 1999 when the complex first opened, so we have had a Canadian Tire store, and it was great, but certainly things need to be looked at as far as the [rodent] aspect goes with the Town and how they are going to monitor that as part of the clean-up.?

Mr. de Bruin also cited worries about snow plowing in the parking lot as well as a monitoring well situated in the parking lot.

"The community does need something in there and they are all for that, but it is about getting that right fit for our community and the Town of Aurora," he concluded.

Many of the points raised by the delegate were taken up by Councillor Wendy Gaertner who said she had the same concerns.

"I had the honour of living pretty near a truck loading dock and it was noisy, there were a lot of fumes, and there doesn't seem to be many time constraints," she said. "We, as a Council, will hopefully ask the developer to do what they can to help you."

These sentiments were echoed by Councillor Sandra Humfries, who said, "We're going to be looking at where that loading dock is going to go, what the noise level anticipation is going to be and I believe that will come to us during [the site plan stage]. We want to make sure your living will be comfortable and you won't be inundated with unwanted environmental issues."

Following the delegation, some of the points raised by the delegate were pointed out to staff by Council, including the impacts of the drive-thru and buffers separating the plaza from the nearby subdivision.

Whether or not the existing buffers and associated landscaping will need to be upgraded to accommodate Canadian Tire's plans is something that will be examined, said staff.