

MTO permits off-road vehicles to be used on County roads, Council not happy

Written By PAULA BROWN

Dufferin County councillors expressed their unease with the Province now allowing dirt bikes and extreme terrain vehicles on public roads during their meeting on Aug. 13.

"I don't understand why they have expanded the vehicles that can go on roads because there is enough accidents, noise and irritation from all these off-road vehicles now," said Mulmur Mayor Janet Horner. "Why are we doing this, I don't see any value in doing this at all."

The County of Dufferin received a letter from the Ministry of Transportation (MTO), dated July 10, that said the Province had expanded the types of off-road vehicles that were allowed to be used on-road as of July 1. The two additions included "off-road motorcycles" or dirt bikes and extreme terrain vehicles (ETVs), which are semi-amphibious vehicles with six or more wheels.

"It is important to note that the same on-road access rules for existing off-road vehicles continue to apply for these new vehicles on provincial roadways," wrote Angela Litrenta, director of the safety program development branch at the MTO.

Orangeville Mayor Sandy Brown was in agreement, saying he was in the same boat with Coun. Horner, also noting the trespassing by dirt bikers and ATV riders on undeveloped land in Orangeville.

"They're trespassing on the land and they're getting to it by, at this point, riding illegally on town roads," said Coun. Brown.

Mono Deputy Mayor John Creelman, who was also acting Warden in the meeting, said that he doesn't think there is an "appetite" to expand the use of off-road vehicles on the municipal roads.

Grand Valley Mayor Steve Solomon also added that users of the off-road vehicles have said that the municipalities are too restrictive.

Bylaws to permit the use of off-road vehicles, or to prohibit them has been left up to each municipality to decide.