

County council prepared to kill OP

The County of Dufferin official plan appears doomed for a still birth unless the minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing grants Orangeville and Mono continued exemptions from upper-tier approval of their official plan changes and makes it possible for all other municipalities to be granted similar exemptions.

An inclusion provision to that effect has been included in the proposed official plan. But that has to be approved by the minister.

Orangeville Deputy Mayor Warren Maycock told county council he would oppose approval of the OP unless his town were granted the continuing exemption, and Mayor Rob Adams said he would concur.

Mono representatives didn't clearly indicate their positions, but Mayor Laura Ryan said she hadn't been aware that Mono could be stripped of its exemption. Amaranth Mayor Don MacIver made clear his expectation that his township should be entitled to the same exemption as it does have a full-time staff planner.

The weighted vote at county council is such that Orangeville, which has 12 of the total 29, would need only three supporting ballots to carry the vote. This would happen if the Orangeville vote were supported only by Mono.

In this case, it's unlikely the weighting of votes would be a factor in the outcome. The recorded vote Thursday on the inclusion clearly showed that members expect equal treatment in the official plan.

But the ministry requires that an official plan be adopted; and the ministry has approval authority for the official plan.

Mark Christie, the ministry's director of planning, told the council he can't speak for the minister (Linda Jeffrey, Brampton-Springdale) but he reiterated that Owen Sound is the only lower-tier municipality to have been granted continuing exemption under a county official plan.

As has been reported here on more than one occasion, and at several times in public meetings, Owen Sound is Grey County's county seat, and was a city within the county prior to Grey's official plan. The continuing exemption, according to Mr. Christie, relates to the unique situation.

When the issue was broached at a recent Saturday morning public meeting in Shelburne, about 30 citizens were told that the consultants and Project Manager Tracy Atkinson were conducting discussions with the ministry on the Orangeville-Mono situation.

By Wes Keller