

Climate strike held outside Town Hall

Written By **Paula Brown**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Their numbers were small in person, but 18 shoes placed around them signified the youth across the county protesting online.

Annie and Naomi Cameron, sisters and students from Centre Dufferin District High School (CDDHS), stood outside Shelburne Town Hall last Friday (March 19) as part of a global climate strike.

Their message ? no more empty promises.

?We're here in front of Town Hall to ask for no more empty promises from the government, we want effective and efficient change today, and every day so we can stem the climate problem,? Annie Cameron explained to the Free Press.

The demonstration outside Shelburne Town Hall, was one of hundreds happening across the globe both in-person and virtually as part of the Fridays for Future (FFF) movement started by environmental activist Greta Thunberg in 2018.

The FFF Global Climate Strike shared a list of immediate actions from world leaders including ending investments in fossil fuel exploration and extraction, annual carbon budgets, and making ecocide an international crime.

Locally, the Cameron sisters are calling for the preservation of land in Dufferin County.

?We want to see change and preservation in Dufferin County, I want to see a council built or recognition on a municipal level of how we can preserve what we have,? said Annie, who noted the fight against the Mega Quarry over a decade ago, as an example of land preservation.

Dufferin County Council during their March 11 meeting adopted a climate action plan to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emission by 2050, while she acknowledges the move by council Cameron adds that it's not enough.

?The idea that we have something in place is amazing, we need to be following that, but the problem is, that's not enough,? said Cameron. ?We need to reach that goal, but we should be reaching it before that year because that's the time when things start to get too close and too late.?

Joining the two sisters in the global protest were Alliston residents Kimberlea Bell-Smith and Robert Squires with their two grandchildren Ben and Cameron.

After seeing a post about the global demonstration from Greta Thunberg, Bell-Smith researched where protests would be happening locally and said they made the decision to lend their support.

?This is what we can do for our grandchildren,? said Bell Smith. ?I want to educate them, to bring them up to date, make them understand how important this is and if they can bring this information back to their school or community, they can learn [a] way to help this along.?

While the small group stood outside Town Hall, cars passing by could be heard honking horns in support of the cause.

?It's really encouraging to see people react this way. Change cannot occur unless a group of people are dedicated to it, it's really nice to see that the community is backing us up and they care about the environment in our town and Dufferin County,? said Annie.

For more information on Fridays for Future and the climate crisis go to www.fridaysforfuture.org.