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County considers policy to allow memorial signs on Dufferin highways

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

Dufferin County needs a formal policy that will allow residents to celebrate loved ones who died in preventable traffic mishaps.

That was the plea Elizabeth Mangos brought to county council when it met on May 28. Her mother was Fay Mangos, and she was run off the road on County Road 109 east of County Road 11 by a young, impaired driver in October 2010.

Fay Mangos was driving to work when she died after a 2010 Chevrolet pickup truck crossed the centre line in Amaranth and struck her car at about 5 a.m. She and her husband ran George's Family Restaurant in Grand Valley.

Elizabeth Mangos asked that the county adopt a formal policy to allow memorial roadside signage to be erected at sites where a person was killed in a preventable traffic collision.

Elizabeth Mangos told council that her mother wasn't just a beloved wife, sister, grandmother, and friend. Her mother was a deeply committed member of the Dufferin County community, she said.

Fay Mangos spent nearly 30 years in the restaurant business, and her family restaurant was far more than a place to eat.

?It was a place where people found food, advice, encouragement, practical help, and where customers often became part of an extended community around her,? Elizabeth Mangos said. ?She was known for hard work, generosity, compassion, and her habit of helping people without judgment.?

She said her mother supported the local business community, teams in many sports streams, and helped the Grand Valley Fire Department by providing meeting space.

?And responded whenever the community needed help,? Elizabeth Mango said of her mother. ?When families fell on hard times, meals were provided without charge. During severe winter weather when motorists were stranded after road closures on County Road 109, Fay opened her restaurant to offer shelter and warm meals until travel was safe again.?

Elizabeth Mango said a highway memorial sign would recognize a woman whose daily life reflected service, generosity, and commitment to her community and acknowledge the enduring grief caused by her violent death at the hands of an impaired driver.

Such incidents introduce disruption to many lives, she said.

?A sign would not undo that loss, but it would provide dignified public recognition at the place where her life was taken and would stand as a visible reminder of the consequences of impaired driving,? she said.

An official county policy would ensure all requests are weighed fairly and consistently.

Memorial signs should apply only to fatalities on Dufferin roads and be requested by an immediate family member or authorized representative.

County staff can review to ensure safe roads. And Elizabeth Mangos suggested a standardized format govern sign design.

Signs will be placed near the site of the highway collision and will be erected for a fixed term. And, of course, approval rests with county staff.

?This request is for a structured policy that balances compassion with safety, consistency, and administrative clarity,? she said.

A standard policy would help the upper-tier council respond to future requests on a case-by-case basis.

?My mother Fay lived her life with generosity, strength, humour, and a deep sense of responsibility to others,? she said. ?Recognizing her with a memorial sign would honour not only the way she died but, more importantly, the way she lived and the community she helped build.?

Councillor Todd Taylor, who is also Orangeville's deputy mayor, said there's a bench that memorializes his late father.

?So I get why you would want to do this,? Taylor said. ?It strikes a chord with me.?

He suggested Mangos' idea for a highway memorial policy may be something county staff could investigate and forward a report to council.

?I love the idea,? he said. ?At this point I just think it would be wrong to say yes.?

Coun. Fred Nix, who is Mono's deputy mayor, said he lives on a county road on which ?many people have died.?

?Given that's being done on county roads now, I guess my assumption is there would be nothing stopping you from doing it yourself,? Nix said.

If the family were to go ahead and erect a memorial sign, Elizabeth Mangos said that weather and high winds could push it into the road and cause a traffic accident.

?I don't think I could live with myself,? she said.