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Local Tim Hortons to open ahead of schedule

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A traffic light instillation won't be stopping the opening of Shelburne's new Tim Hortons, thanks to Shelburne Council approving a request from the owner to go ahead with opening.

During their Council meeting on Monday (Nov. 23), Shelburne councillors voted ?yes? to a relief of site plan approval request, which will allow the chain restaurant to open their doors prior to the required instillation of traffic lights.

?I think this is the best course of action we have to make sure the Tim Hortons is still going to be a key tenant of this plaza,? town planner, Steve Wever said to councillors.

The new Tim Hortons is part of the Summerhill Plaza development on the north end of town and is located on Owen Sound Street (Hwy. 10) at Colonel Phillips Drive.

An original site plan approval for the development, implemented back in May of 2019, called for traffic lights to be installed at the intersection before any of the buildings in the plaza could be occupied.

Wever said the approval process for the traffic light has been extensive, included an environmental assessment, and multiple design submission, before it was finalized. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been delays in the approval process.

?The challenge that has resulted from all this extended length of time and some of the delays related to COVID this year through the MTO review process, has been that the site plan agreement requires signalization and intersection work to be completed [before] any occupancy is granted in the plaza,? said Wever.

Delays in the approval process have now resulted in the construction of the lights needing to be held off until spring 2021 as it would now involve winter construction. The new Tim Hortons could be ready to open at the end of the year, or sometime in January, which is why the owner is asking for leniency on the original agreement.

Wever said that the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) supported the Tim Hortons opening prior to the light instillation.

Following the report from Wever, councillors addressed some of their concerns with the approval.

Coun. Walter Benotto questioned if parking of transport trucks had been looked at, citing issues on Hwy. 124, where the town's other Tim Hortons is located.

?We want the highway at least signed as a minimum to identify trucks are not allowed to park along the shoulders of the highway,? said Wever adding the curbs near the intersections will help.

Mayor Wade Mills also added that he was ?slightly? uncomfortable with waiving the approval, which was specifically put in place for safety, but with the MTO's support, he's more agreeable to the idea.

While the chain restaurant has been approved to open, other units in the plaza will not be allowed occupancy until the lights are installed.