

Lions Sports Pad lights to be on during holidays trial

By Tabitha Wells

Although the lights at the Lions Sports Pad haven't officially been turned on yet, they are already causing problems for some residents.

At last week's special meeting of Orangeville Council, two residents came out to speak to members of Council regarding the severe overspill of light, causing more light pollution than had been promised.

The lights were supposed to be set up and designed so that only the sports pad would be lit up, but as resident Stephanie Wilson puts it, it's bright enough for her to read a book from her yard.

"My house backs onto the park," she explained. "I'm not against the pad or the lighting, but as my neighbour Kevin explained, the current lighting is incredibly intrusive."

She also presented concerns with the proposed trial period that the Lions were hoping to have passed at Council, which would have seen the lights capable of being turned on between 4:30 and 10:30 p.m..

"Not all of us on the street are 9 to 5 workers," said Ms. Wilson. "A good majority of the people whose homes back onto the area are shift workers. When the lights are on, they're inviting people to come over, inviting more vehicles, but this is all at the cost of the residents."

The discussion by Council took place over the better part of an hour, with several disagreements, including whether the trial should be put on hold, with the issue being referred back to the recreation committee to resolve.

However, Councillor Don Kidd pointed out that part of the reason this was brought to Council was so that kids and families could utilize the sports pad over the holidays. He added that he hopes that the Lions do not feel this was an attack on them.

"They didn't get involved with this to cause havoc in the community, they did this to work with and benefit the community," he said.

After several revisions of the motion, Council determined that the Lions would be allowed to move forward with a trial period over the Christmas holidays, with the lights being accessible between 5 and 8 p.m., being turned off completely on January 4. At that time, the situation would go to the Recreation Committee, where the committee would work with Town Staff, the Lions and the residents for a viable solution.

In the meantime, Acting CAO Ed Brennan explained that the Town will speak with the residents and continue investigating a solution, including whether installing proper shields on the lights would assist in reducing the problem.

The Recreation Committee is set to meet in early January.