

Electric car charging station idea short-circuited

By **Jim Eadie**

Wollaston council's initial enthusiasm for participating in the province of Ontario's Electric Vehicle Charger Program was dashed by a short circuit delivered by the township clerk at the Jan. 26 regular meeting.

At the previous meeting on Jan. 12, council learned that the province of Ontario was offering grants to public or private partners to establish a network of fast charging electric car stations across Ontario. Clerk Jennifer Cohen was tasked to get the detailed information, and bring it back to council. However, clearly the devil was in the details.

“Unfortunately, the funding through this program is available only to support inter-city traffic. So it must be within one kilometre of a major highway interchange [meaning the 400 series highways], or within a city,” Cohen reported.

Deep within the paperwork, the program overview from the province states that applicants will be assessed for “their potential to support Inter-City and In-City travel across the province.” It goes on to define inter-city transportation corridors as 400 series highways, Highway 11, Highway 69; and the urban areas of Greater Toronto, Ottawa, Waterloo Region, Barrie, and similar regions. In-city locations are to be located near major attractions, retail, hospitality, condominiums and multi-unit dwellings.

“That just ticks me off,” said Councillor Michael Fuerth. “Just another thing where we get overlooked. Who is to say people travelling along the 401 don't want to come here?”

“The CAA map shows there is a big red hole that we are in the middle of,” said Cohen, referring to the lack of availability of any fast-charging stations anywhere near Coe Hill on the map.

“Maybe we should still take the initiative,” said Reeve Graham Blair, “and still try to get one here.”

“The Provincial Policy Statement hurts development in rural areas, and talks about infilling urban areas,” said Cohen. “This illustrates further suffocation of development in rural areas.”

“I have a solution to this,” said Fuerth with his tongue planted firmly in his cheek. “Highway 620 ? let's re-name it 420, so it's a 400 series highway! Then we will fall into line.”