

Automotive facility moves ahead, car wash on hold

By Mark Pavilons

The operation and alterations to the Nobleton property that's home to a car wash and auto service centre created some public concerns at King council recently.

After public presentations and a lengthy discussion, council decided to allow the service centre to proceed with conditional occupancy, but they put a hold on the automated car wash. The application for 24/7 hours of the coin-operated car wash was denied. This project has been in the works for a very long time. The owner originally submitted a bid for a zoning change back in 2011 to permit the auto service centre and car wash. The plans were revised in 2016 and trees were moved in 2017.

Last year, the Township discovered the applicant made some modifications to the plan without permission from council. A second drive-through stacking lane was added, and the planting strip, adjacent to the residential properties to the south, was reduced.

Other problems on the site were identified by King staff, including the hours for the coin operated car wash. Staff pointed out the construction of a second queuing lane, with an additional machine teller, was done without approval.

The applicant was told to apply for a revision to the site plan to mitigate the issues, which also include an amendment to the noise bylaw.

Neighbouring residents pointed out since the car wash began operating, every time in rains, their properties experience flooding.

They argue the changes made impacted water runoff and stormwater management and they wanted their properties protected.

A Farmcrest Court resident pleaded with council to fix the issues with this site, which included noise, lighting and of course the flooding, which make his back yard impossible to enjoy.

He wanted to know how this process failed and why these unapproved changes were made. "They didn't follow the original plans," he said. "How was this allowed?"

The rules simply were not followed and the results have caused stress for his family. "We can't enjoy our back yard," he said.

Another Farmcrest resident showed photos of the water buildup on his property. He pointed to deficiencies of the site's stormwater management system as the cause. Water runoff mitigation is desperately needed.

A King Road resident complained about the noise coming from the site, from customers revving their engines.

The applicant did submit a revised stormwater management report in September 2018. King staff have signed off on the revisions.

Architect Duro Bicanic said they have planted trees on the neighbouring properties to help with a buffer. They also lowered the lights and placed shields on them to lessen the impacts. The lights are necessary, he said, as it's one of the only security measures for car washes that are open late at night.

The project, he said, was plagued by dealing with several engineers at the Township, who subsequently left their positions. He said they provided the necessary studies and were given approval by staff, who said the drainage system was adequate.

There are still some outstanding landscaping issues.

Staff recommended that the owner apply for a minor variance and once this is approved, the automated car wash with the dual drive-through lane can proceed. Staff, however, did not support allowing them to operate the coin bays 24/7.

Planning director Stephen Naylor said in the end, the site functions as it should. He did admit, however, there have been "issues and challenges" throughout.

There was a lot of discussion on the impacts of the car wash, and Mayor Steve Pellegrini wanted the two aspects of this project separated, so the auto service centre can proceed.

The mayor also wanted concrete solutions to solving the drainage woes for neighbouring homeowners. He asked that the second lane for the car wash be closed.

Councillor Jordan Cescolini said it frustrated him that the applicant strayed from the original approvals.

Councillor Avia Eek said the flooding has to be addressed and measures put in place to absorb rain water. "Some serious conversations need to take place," she said.

Councillor Debbie Schaefer stressed a "full review" needs to be done.