

Council defers ruling on model home

By Mark Pavilons

King councillors deferred a bid to build a model home and sales centre in King City. Councillors are encouraging the applicant and area homeowners to discuss the issues. Mayor Steve Pellegrini and Councillor subsequently met with a small group of residents, who reiterated their opposition. At the heart of the matter is an amendment to allow a temporary use on 198 Carmichael Crescent, for a model home and parking lot. Residents are concerned this will lead to increased traffic, parking and safety woes in their prestigious subdivision. The lot, they point out, is outside of the building envelope. Westview Star Equity hopes to build the model home and operate it for 19 months, starting August 2021. Visits will be made by appointment only, with a limit of 10 per day. While the office will be closed Fridays, it will run Monday to Thursday, as well as weekends. The accompanying parking lot will accommodate at least 18 vehicles. Staff pointed out the development would include a parking lot in the rear yard, along with acoustic fencing, landscaping, drainage and walkways. The ample parking will alleviate any need for overflow parking on the street. The lot is located at the southeast corner of Keele and Carmichael, surrounded by single detached homes. Staff pointed out a 2.4-metre-high acoustic fence is planned to reduce noise and lights from the parking lot. Zoning and planning rules allow for this use, to a maximum of three years. The temporary use permit would expire in February 2023. Staff have put restrictions on what goes on inside the model home, to reduce its intensity. These measures should help to lessen the impact on the neighbourhood. The basic question is whether a model home is appropriate in a developed residential subdivision. Planning staff recommended the application be approved. Public input helped sway council in their decision to hold off. Councillor Jordan Cescolini said he's received several submissions from residents concerned about their quality of life in this prestigious area. Show homes, especially lottery homes in this area in the past, have created havoc. The councillor pointed out in this day and age, sales could be conducted virtually and there's no real need for a bricks and mortar sales pavilion. Mayor Pellegrini said residents didn't have much time to review this latest application. He pointed out there's no real rush, since the model home would not begin operating until next August. One of the project's main opponents, resident Nick Pantaleo, noted the proposal is simply inappropriate and is not fair for the residents in the area. It also sets a bad precedent for future development in King Township by allowing developers to change the rules. The developer is essentially attempting to insert a commercial activity in a residential area that is sure to create significant traffic congestion. Pantaleo said the mayor and Councillor Cescolini met with a group of residents this past week. They heard the residents reiterate their strong opposition to the application and the report prepared by the planning department. The residents also presented the mayor and the councillor with another petition to reject the application.