

Speed limit reduced on township's gravel roads

By Angela Gismondi

Members of King council have differing views when it comes to reducing the speed limit on gravel roads in the Township.

In engineering report presented at the June 10 committee of the whole meeting, staff proposed the speed limit on gravel roads in the township be reduced from 80 kilometres per hour (km/h) to 60 km/h.

Mayor Steve Pellegrini said he was hesitant about dropping the speed by 20 km/h on gravel roads. He said it was too big a jump and asked council to consider changing the speed limit to 70 km/h instead.

'We will never be able to move the speed limit up as a municipality,' said Pellegrini.

Councillor Linda Pabst disagreed with the mayor.

'If you post it at 60 (km/h) they will go 70 (km/hr) but if you put it at 70 (km/h) they'll go 80 (km/h),' said Pabst. 'I'm happy with 60, I think it's fabulous. We're proud of our hills in King and we're proud of our agricultural community and our farmers have to use those roads.'

Councillor Cleve Mortelliti said he was encouraged to see the speed limit reduced to 60 km/h on gravel roads.

'I know it's slow but the residents in the area were concerned,' said Mortelliti.

Pellegrini said he was concerned about artificially low speed limits.

Cober agreed the proposed limit might be too low.

'Eighty (km/h) to 60 (km/h) is a big jump,' said Cober.

Rob Flindall, director of engineering and public works for the township, explained to council that if the speed on gravel roads remains posted at 80 km/h, drivers might travel even faster on those roads, which is dangerous.

'We want to advise drivers that for the condition of road they're driving on, 60 (km/h) is appropriate,' said Flindall.

Pellegrini said he was not excited about seeing the limit dropped to 60 km/h.

'There are some roads that you can very easily go higher speeds,' said Pellegrini citing the 11th Concession as an example. 'In the morning people aren't doing 60. If you're doing 60 you have a line-up of people behind you trying to pass you.'

Councillor Avia Eek responded it's easy for people to lose control on gravel roads.

'I can appreciate where you're coming from but I think 60 km/h is good for gravel roads,' said Eek. 'People drive crazy on those roads.'

The staff report also requested council pass a bylaw to consolidate rates of speed on roads under the jurisdiction of the Township of King. The bylaw and the speed limit reduction on gravel roads were approved by council.