

Council grants exemption to car wash

By Angela Gismondi

Council has granted a noise bylaw exemption to allow a gas station in King City to run a car wash.

Shell Canada Limited requested the noise exemption to allow for the operation of a commercial car wash at the service station/gas bar, located at the northwest corner of King Road and Dufferin Street, King City, known as King North Commercial.

The exemption, granted at a council meeting Sept. 9, permits the operation of a commercial car wash with air drying components, seven days a week, between the hours of 6 a.m. and 11 p.m.

Shell initially submitted to staff a request for consideration of granting an exemption to permit a 24/7 operation. As a result of discussions with staff, Shell has revised their initial request.

Nancy Hopkinson, a Nobleton resident, made a deputation to council during the committee meeting. Hopkinson spoke to the issue because it has to do with the noise bylaw.

"We have a petition about the noise bylaw because we don't like noise," said Hopkinson, adding the bylaw was enacted in 1981. "I think this was a pretty good bylaw in its day but it needs to be updated."

She explained that under the bylaw, the owner is able to operate a car wash from Monday to Saturday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. She also said that the bylaw states parties may be granted exemptions, but not in excess of six months.

"If you write this in your site plan development agreement you contravene your bylaw," said Hopkinson. "I don't like the idea of giving them carte blanche for more than six months at a time."

Township clerk Kathryn Smyth said staff recognizes the current noise bylaw requires review and updating. Originally exemptions to the noise bylaw were considered for special circumstances. She explained the provisions within for commercial car washes with air drying components is very restrictive by today's standards. It is also noted that the technologies for such mechanics has advanced considerably, dramatically reducing noise emissions, since the bylaw was originally enacted.

Similar car wash operations exist within neighbouring municipalities, many of which border adjacent residential areas, consistent with the development being proposed within King.

Staff is currently in the process of reviewing the noise bylaw and the revised bylaw is intended to come before council before the end of the year.

The car wash will also provide a benefit to the residents in the area.

According to the staff report, service stations are typically located close to residential areas to ensure that the services are readily accessible, serving both the area residents as well as the anticipated commuters through this area.

"In keeping with communities being developed to serve its residents locally, it is reasonable and practical to anticipate that services meeting our residents' needs is supported and encouraged, thereby reducing the need to travel to adjacent communities and further protecting the environment through carbon footprint reduction," reads the staff report.

Shell also provided a list of comparators, other Shell operations in the neighbouring municipalities to demonstrate the extent of operational hours permitted by other municipalities. One of the examples cited is located very close to King, at King Road and Bathurst Street in Richmond Hill.

Councillor Cleve Mortelliti said his neighbour has been hoping to get a car wash in the community for years.

Councillor Avia Eek had one concern.

"Given that we've had problems in other areas of the township where businesses were there and residents moved in, I just want to make sure that this won't interfere with the existing residents' quiet enjoyment of their home," said Eek.

Smyth responded the car wash will be a good distance away from the residences and noise mitigation methods are being incorporated into the development, to minimize negative impact on the surrounding land uses. This includes noise attenuation fencing, landscaping and berming, distancing of parking areas.

Councillor Debbie Schaefer was pleased to see that there is no residential area immediately adjacent to the car wash.

"After I saw that I felt much more comfortable with it," she said.

In the end, council decided to approve the staff recommendations to approve the noise exemption request submitted by Shell Canada. Staff will ensure that the provisions of the hours of operation are incorporated within the respective site plan development agreement for the commercial development.