

Council asks staff to expedite Zoning Bylaw and Official Plan reviews

By Angela Gismondi

The Township's Zoning Bylaw and Official Plan review process is under way, but some members of council and local landowners want to see the project completed sooner than scheduled.

A timeline for the Zoning Bylaw reviews and the Official Plan review was presented at the Committee of the Whole meeting recently. MMM Group is currently in the process of completing the third and final stage of the Nobleton Zoning Bylaw review and staff has requested a proposal from the company to do a similar review for the communities of King City and Schomberg.

At the meeting, council adopted a recommendation to proceed with sole source procurement of consulting services from MMM Group to undertake the development of new zoning bylaws for King City and Schomberg. The project will cost \$65,920 excluding HST.

The Nobleton Zoning Bylaw review project started in October 2014 when MMM Group was retained by the Township. The first draft was released in May 2015, presented at a public open house in June 2015 and was available for comment and input until the end of August 2015.

The consultants are currently preparing the final draft of the Nobleton bylaw and it is anticipated it will be made available to the public in late April 2016, in advance of the statutory public meeting in May. The bylaw, which will be a prototype for new zoning bylaws for King City and Schomberg, is slated to be put before council for approval in June.

The Official Plan review started in June 2014, at which time Meridian Planning Consultants were retained by the Township to undertake the preparation of an updated official plan to replace the Township's current, outdated Official Plan from 1970.

The Official Plan Review is not progressing as quickly as originally planned, staff reported. Despite the delay, they are satisfied with concluding the Nobleton Zoning Bylaw review process as planned. It is expected the work on the final phase of the Official Plan review will take place through summer 2016. Final consultation on the updated official plan will take place in fall 2016, with recommendations for adoption expected before the end of the year.

Councillor Debbie Schaefer wanted to make sure staff will be able to stick to the timelines.

"I, along with the rest of council, am very anxious to see us come to closure on this," said Schaefer. "What do we need to do to make sure we meet this timeline?"

Planning staff considers the updated project timelines to be appropriate to effectively carry out the remaining project tasks, explained Stephen Kitchen, director of planning for the Township.

"It's the unforeseen that can cause hiccups or slowdowns in terms of the process," Kitchen stated. "We've tried to allow adequate time to review all the documents as they come through. Assuming that there are no other unknowns, I'm fairly confident that we can maintain this timeline."

He added that staff could provide council with quarterly update reports to ensure the project is on time and on schedule.

Mayor Steve Pellegrini asked staff to expedite the process.

"Is there any way we can compress the time," asked Pellegrini. "Have you guys looked at ways to move this along?"

While he is pleased with the work done so far, he said he will be pushing to get the project completed sooner than expected.

"I would really like to see if we can move this along faster," said Pellegrini.

As for the King City and Schomberg Zoning Bylaw review, the work program is scheduled to begin before the end of March. Work is expected take place over the course of the next 12 months, with public consultation components occurring in each of three phases. The project is planned to conclude with recommendation for council adoption in March 2017.

Local property owners were also interested in seeing the new bylaws approved sooner rather than later. James Durbano, who owns property on Highway 27, came before council to ask that the zoning bylaw which pertains to his parcel of land be approved so that he can move ahead with his plan to build a new development which would include a retirement residence and a nursing home.

Pellegrini informed Durbano that this was not a forum to discuss private property matters.

"We are giving staff authority to get going on this so we can look at those lands," explained Pellegrini. "We're trying to move this project along."

Durbano said the last time he came before council in 2013, he was told that he would be informed of any developments with respect to his parcel of land, but he has not heard anything in three years. He asked council if he should take the matter to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) instead of "spending a couple years further on this."

"It's not a threat," Durbano insisted.

Local resident Rob Payne said he was very much in support of the bylaw review process.

?If it is possible to move the timelines ahead, that would be preferred,? he said. ?If we could move the process along quickly it would be appreciated.?

Councillor Cleve Mortelliti asked that the project be completed by the end of the year, instead of next spring.

?I just want us to stop talking already and get going with this,? said Mortelliti. ?I would like the consultants to have the urgency, I want staff to have the urgency ? this is taking way too long.?

He pointed out that the OMB was mentioned during the meeting. He suggested that the King City and Schomberg plan not be lumped together so that in case the matter does go to the OMB, one bylaw is not dragged in with the other.

?I want to make sure we're not sitting here for another five years,? said Mortelliti.

Schaefer wanted to ensure council is kept informed of the review every step of the process by way of quarterly reports.

?If anything emerges that threatens the timeline, that needs to be proactively brought forward so we can understand that,? said Schaefer.

Kitchen responded that will be considered as part of the review process. He added staff will explore all options to compress the timeline.

?We will certainly continue to look for opportunities to expedite the process,? Kitchen concluded.