

Mayor wants new cell tower to look like a tree

By Mark Pavilons

King's mayor is adamant that a proposed cell tower reflects the municipality's green philosophy.

Mayor Steve Pellegrini led the charge recently, adding that a project's approval be conditional on the structure resembling a tree. The location and visibility of the planned tower would make it stick out like a sore thumb, so Pellegrini wanted this one to be camouflaged.

Companies like Bell Canada have built towers that resemble natural trees in other parts of Ontario.

"I want a tree," Pellegrini said. "I'm expecting better."

Pellegrini said he doesn't want this to be a cold monolith, perched high on a hill for all to see.

SBA Canada is proposing the 150-foot tower for Brookdale Treeland Nurseries at 15500 Highway 27, just north of the 17th Sideroad.

The plan is to attract service providers to co-locate in one location (up to four providers), to provide enhanced wireless services in Nobleton and Schomberg.

Morteza Alabaf, on behalf of SBA, said the mayor's request is problematic. The tree-like towers are all single-provider structures. In order to accommodate multiple providers, the tree design can't be used.

Mayor Pellegrini loved the idea the tower will host several providers, thus eliminating the need for multiple towers dotting the landscape. However, he challenged SBA to be the first to do this and he'll be their biggest cheerleader if they can accommodate his request.

The tower on BTN will be located near the existing driveway, roughly 283 metres from Highway 27.

Staff noted the approval of telecommunications facilities is under federal jurisdiction, administered by Industry Canada. Municipal approval in the process is constrained, but Industry Canada does request the proponent consult with the municipality. King does have a "Protocol for Establishing Telecommunications Facilities."

A public information session was required and held July 24 in Nobleton. No one from the public attended.

Staff pointed out that SBA Canada is not a telecommunications company, but rather provides infrastructure only with its towers.

The proposed tower will serve residents with continuous coverage along the Highway 27 corridor between Schomberg and Nobleton where reception is considered poor.