

Positive reception to King City apartment building

By Mark Pavilons

Plans for a four-storey apartment building in King City has received largely positive response from the public.

King Station Inc. presented its plans to council Jan. 27. The application, which includes amendments to the official plan and various setbacks, will be reviewed by staff and return to council for recommendations.

The plan is for a stepped building on Keele Street, just south of King Road. The building includes 23 rental apartments, 816 square metres of commercial space and both underground and above-ground parking.

The apartments include both one-bedroom (7) and two-bedroom (16) units. There are also plans for rooftop amenities but plans are vague at this point.

The building will sit on the .239-hectare property, which slopes down and away from Keele, abutting the Metrolinx rail corridor. The vacant lot has been remediated.

Staff noted the King City Community Plan designates the lands as core area, allowing both commercial and residential uses.

Currently, policies limit height of new buildings to three storeys, but King's new official plan does permit more, if the buildings are tiered and fits in with adjacent buildings.

A transportation study was done, which included parking and traffic impacts. A travel demand forecast revealed there would be roughly 18 new two-way trips during peak morning hours, and 39 during the afternoon rush hour. The site access is expected to operate at an acceptable level of service with no improvements required, according to staff. Overall, the site traffic from the proposed development is considered to be minor and no improvements are necessary to support the project.

The tiered design, building materials and balconies all work to make the building less intrusive on the landscape.

A single driveway on the north side, will provide access. The building will sit close to the street, and the south lot line.

Staff did point out there's a shortage of parking spots on the property to accommodate both residents and visitors.

The site is well positioned to host the proposed density, since there are no immediate residential neighbours. The property benefits from local amenities and is within a short walking distance of the GO station.

Staff also conceded this form of housing is much needed in the community and will provide a source of housing that expands on choice and affordability and allow for smaller households to reside in the core.

While this will be the largest building in King City, staff are confident it can be integrated into the community through design elements.

An objection was filed by All Saints Anglican Church, regarding a storm sewer outlet pipe that's on the subject property. It drains from the church, but it was blocked at one point. A parishioner said the church endured several floods and they need the problem addressed by the King Station proponents. Staff, church members and the applicants are working to find a solution.

Resident Bruce Craig said this development provides an exciting opportunity for the community.

The combination of residential apartment units and commercial uses on the main floor are welcome.

This proposal meets the goals for intensification in the core area, with excellent access to public transit, and provides an alternative form of housing in King City, which is very much needed and will likely be well received in the community.

Craig also said he hopes the units themselves will be more affordable than existing units in the area.

This is an important opportunity to connect a greater variety of home buyers and renters with King City and its future.

Craig also encourages the developer to utilize as many green features as possible, noting they are in a good position to become leaders and trend-setters with this development, in terms of LEED standards.

Another resident was concerned whether existing roads could handle the increase in traffic.

Another resident suggested that the flat roof would lend itself to various eco-initiatives such as solar, to help reduce emissions.

Consultant Murray Evans, on behalf of the proponents, said they will work to address the public's concerns. Many of the issues will be discussed once the project reaches the site plan stage.

Councillor Debbie Schaefer said work needs to be done to address parking on Keele Street. She wants the Township to continue to work with York Region to tackle the problems, which are outside of this particular development.

Councillor Jordan Cescolini noted if we keep working at it, we will have something nice in the core.