

## Pathak provokes thought at CAK's AGM

By Mark PavilonsEditor

There are no quick fixes to the climate change challenge, but there are short- and long-term approaches. Citizens, along with governments at all levels, need to be 'provoked' into action. That message came from Prashant Pathak, chair of Kingbridge Centre and Innovation Hub, guest speaker for Climate Action King's inaugural AGM. Pathak stressed there needs to be dialogue at all levels and especially within the community to 'energize' people to be impactful. Leaving climate change solutions to the marketplace is a mistake, he said, noting market-driven innovations are often short-sighted. 'What this implies is pursuit of 'green washed' ideas may give us some near term comfort yet not move the needle in long term,' Pathak said. Understanding and altering our consumption is key, he said, to sustainability. Proactive citizens' groups, such as CAK, need to look beyond emissions and the fossil fuels industry. Attacking climate change requires a comprehensive plan, taking each issue further and including economic analysis. In order for King Township to meet its 45% reduction target we have to generate ideas and alter people's behaviour to lower the per capita emissions. That's the challenge, he said. At Kingbridge, they're implementing various ideas, monitoring the progress and impact, and creating a 'play book' to apply to the greater society. From fostering pollinators and experimenting with different species of trees, staff at Kingbridge hope to generate very real solutions. 'Based on the early work we have done at Kingbridge with local partners indicates we can effectively move the needle given our natural and green endowments and forest cover. Additionally, that combined with the agri and food productivity from the marsh provides us a clear advantage to develop a low carbon and i daresay even a carbon negative city. Let alone net zero. 'Having a satisfactory impact within our city and across the region on issues of sustainability will require a simultaneous collective and individual effort. It will also mean changing some long developed habits and conveniences. The most effective path to addressing sustainability is smartly and efficiently reducing consumption on a unit basis versus output basis. This essentially means reducing the overall carbon footprint and 'embedded' carbon load across all of our activities while maintaining the useful throughout of those activities. This includes understanding the energy balance of our most common daily and repeated activities. Small changes herein can make big impact overall, he noted. Locally, there are some easy goals that will help in the long-term. Pathak suggested residents look at their driving patterns, idling and even vehicle heating and air conditioning usage. These all impact energy efficiency. Simple things, like encouraging everyone to use nitrogen in their car tires, can also help immensely. 'We have to start 'driving behaviour change. 'Regarding single-use plastics, Pathak said the problem lies not in their production, but in their efficient use and packaging. People tend to look at the perceived convenience and habits have to change. Angelo Santorelli, president of the King Chamber of Commerce, asked if consumer rewards or incentives would help change attitudes. This, Pathak said, is tricky in that these can lead to disincentives so we have to be careful how they're applied. If people think they're more energy efficient, it can actually lead to over-consumption and negate any real benefits. However, if a local developer building a subdivision installs heat pumps in every home, that will make a huge difference. He lauded the members of CAK and the Township for being aware and concerned about climate change, and working towards solutions. The task now is the convince the silent majority to get on board.