

Council reiterates support for hospital lands, Greenbelt

By Mark PavilonsEditor

King council is sending a message to the Province that it wants affordable housing types, as changes to the Greenbelt are in the offing. Further, council reiterated its support for specific lands deemed ideal for the expansion of the new Southlake Regional Hospital. In a motion submitted by Councillor Debbie Schaefer, King made it loud and clear that if Queen's Park goes ahead with change to the Greenbelt, they want key natural features to be protected. King initially announced its support for the hospital expansion, by earmarking the lands located at the northwest corner of Davis Drive (Highway 9) and Bathurst. In the newest motion, council wants these lands developed with the highest environmental standards and that 25% of housing units in this area be dedicated to affordable and attainable housing. Further, council is urging the landowners to work with King and York to build complete and sustainable communities. This is in keeping with King's Official Plan that provides choices and opportunities for all residents of all ages, by providing a diverse range of housing types, transportation modes, employment options, and recreation or leisure activities. The OP also stresses that 25% of all new housing units are affordable. King has a goal to be a leader in environmental conservation and excel as stewards of Ontario's landscape by preserving the integrity and ecological function of the Township's natural assets, including the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Greenbelt to name only two. The Natural Heritage System in the Greenbelt includes core areas and linkage areas of the Protected Countryside with the highest concentration of the most sensitive and/or significant natural features and functions. The Province, the motion notes, has introduced the More Homes Built Faster plan and a proposal to change the Greenbelt Area boundary regulation to enable building homes on lands previously protected from development. King does not agree with changing the Greenbelt Area boundary regulation to enable building homes as York Region alone has over 50,000 housing units that are draft plan approved. King notes that since the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is committed to making it easier to build community housing, it should respect York's Official Plan that places a high priority on support a full range of housing types and amenities. Schaefer explained the main point of the motion is that King tries to influence what happens on those lands, so the result is a well planned community.