

## A little goes a long way toward village beautification

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King Township is a special place to live. We have a reputation the uphold.

The old adage, "a little goes a long way," accurately describes what can be done in our own back yards.

This municipality and its residents pride themselves on finding innovative solutions, creating partnerships and working together for a common goal.

Our Sustainability Plan is a testament to that will and foresight. In fact, this guiding document does address one element of our unique villages that seems to be lacking - a concentration on beautification projects, small and large.

It's likely a matter of priorities, ideas and resources.

But, just as the Township places a great deal of emphasis on branding and "selling itself," so too should we all. Residents are proud to live here and have a lot at stake. They enjoy all that King has to offer and while they may not openly brag about it, there's nothing wrong with letting the rest of the world know about our neck of the woods.

King has been under pressure lately to evolve and grow and there are several projects in various stages of progress.

King boasts some rather high-calibre design standards in new buildings - things that reflect our village characters and respect for our heritage. These are taken into consideration with every application, from a single house restoration to a brand new subdivision.

It only stands to reason that we should give due consideration to our village gateways, corridors and main streets.

Nothing is more appealing than strolling along a well manicured main street, taking in the ambiance and atmosphere of the community. Often, stepping back in time soothes the soul in our hectic society. Aesthetics, at least in the physical strength of a community, can be just as important as its heart and soul.

Just ask some local movers and shakers.

The Nobleton Village Association, which presents the well attended Victoria Day festival each year, works hard to bring people and ideas together.

Its roots include a beautification committee that has evolved into the current organization. With local support, they adorn the village with flowers each spring and summer and maintain them.

Nobleton has seen some improvements lately and boasts the gazebo in front of the library, and the parkette at the four corners. The new plaza housing No Frills is currently growing, and will look quite nice when it's completed and landscaped.

Some, including Councillor Peter Grandilli, have criticized the village aesthetics. There's no reason it can't be spruced up, they contend.

I agree.

Even with a lack of generous funding, there are many things that can be done to brighten things up.

While the four corners of the village are dominated by traffic, areas can be made more pedestrian-friendly and attractive to visitors.

In some towns, BIAs are charged with collecting a levy from businesses, to be used to not only make physical improvements, but

promote shopping locally. In Bolton, for instance, the BIA there over the years was responsible for cobblestone sidewalk inserts, crosswalks, banners, trash cans and benches throughout the core.

Again, every little bit helps.

You'd be surprised how a couple of benches, plantings and trash bins along a street can alter its appearance and function.

Each village in King has its own unique identity. This should be celebrated, not ignored.

And with this comes a heartfelt welcome to visitors and passers-by.

Approaching Schomberg from the south on Highway 27, there's a beautiful stone monument, created by Allstone Quarry Products, a renowned King-based company that has created works of art and building components around the world. It's not something you see every day, at the gateway to every community.

But you should.

It's attractive, warm and inviting. It doesn't whisper, but shouts out to the world.

Every community in King should have a couple of these markers. A beautiful piece of Canadian granite echoes strength, durability and a love of nature ??all qualities that can be attributed to King Township.

There are undoubtedly many volunteers and many projects on various wish-lists across the township. There's also likely some ?history,? too ??conflicting personalities, council receptiveness, etc. Some will say ?we tried that,??but it didn't come together so it was abandoned.

That was then. Today, tomorrow and next week are much different. There's no time like the present to try again and get the ball rolling.

I'd also like to point out that we're heading into a municipal election in 2014 and our local politicians could be much more accommodating to such requests.

The bonus is we have a lot to draw upon. We have talented residents, artists, craftsmen and women, landscapers, great corporate citizens, etc. We have the means, all we need is the will and the ideas.

Village beautification benefits everyone. It will not only bring smiles to everyone's faces today, but stand as lasting reminders of home town pride long into the future.

So, I would encourage residents, citizen's groups and businesses to put on their thinking caps and have a look around. Share your ideas with friends and neighbours.

Together, we can make a difference.

Any takers?