

## Residents asked preferences on future of Nobleton Community Hall

By Mark PavilonsEditor

The public is encouraged to provide input on the future of the Nobleton Community Hall. King councillors are anxious to move ahead on either relocating the building, or demolishing it, but they first want to solicit ideas as to what should be done with this building. Staff presented councillors with the redevelopment of the Nobleton Lions Community Park. Along with looking at neighboring properties, part of the proposal includes designating the library property as surplus. Staff want to move ahead on the project with design on key elements, and finalizing land negotiations. While the park, at 19 Old King Road, is the centre of the plan, dealing with the library property is part of the overall, big picture. There have been many suggestions for the community park, including a pool, amphitheatre, skating rink, soccer pitches, a dog park, and even beach volleyball facility. The survey revealed a new, more modern library and staff recommend relocating it to the park campus. The Township is looking at acquiring and disposing of parcels on Highway 27 and Old King Road. Due to the size and scope of the project, staff note it will be a three-phase undertaking, taking us through 2028. It will also be an expensive project, too. Building a new library is estimated at \$14.5 million, while moving the Nobleton Hall is pegged at \$500,000. Soccer pitches and a pickleball court are estimated to cost a total of \$950,000 and a wading pool/skating rink comes in at \$2 million. The total cost of \$19.45 million will be offset by DCs, municipal capital facilities agreements, and almost \$8 million in the sale of lands. Adequate funds are available to start the project and staff are aiming at formalizing the strategy and funding for the 2024 budget deliberations. The proposed project will be a catalyst for revitalizing the core area of Nobleton, re-imaging and augmenting services for the community for years to come, staff said. This, combined with the possibilities of placemaking and a downtown main street (Old King Road), will be transformative for the residents of Nobleton. The fate of the library and community hall caused some debate at council. Councillor Debbie Schaefer noted a little bit of history is being sold and she urged council to be creative moving forward. She wants to find a way to commemorate the building and the Women's Institute in some way. Mayor Steve Pellegrini said moving the structure would be extremely expensive and the Township has to move ahead on its designation. He said this represents an incredible opportunity and goes along with the block planning concept to create a main street corridor, similar to Schomberg. Councillor David Boyd made the suggestion to hold off on designating the property as surplus for now. He reassured the community that decisions of this magnitude are fully analyzed by staff. He looks forward to the day that Nobleton has a new community hub, whatever form that takes. This, he said, is a step in the right direction. The mayor said anticipated growth and expansion for Nobleton is on the horizon and people will want a community hub. I'm excited at what's before us, he said, noting this has been many years in the works. Staff noted that comments received from the public will be taking into consideration. Former councillor Jakob Schneider pointed to a lack of public notification and consultation on the matter. The community hall, he said, was mothballed by council. The community hall had a heritage designation, restricting what could be done with the building. In order for the Township to demolish or move the structure at an approximate cost of \$500,000 and use it as a storage shed, this designation needed to be removed. Council voted in favor to remove the heritage designation without any community consultation. It's another example of a back door decision by King Township. My question is, what is the point in designating a heritage building if you can remove the designation when the desire is there to demolish the building? This sets precedence for anyone who owns a heritage building and wants to remove the designation and demolish, if the township can do it then so can anyone else. He said the building was clearly worthy of heritage designation by the council of 2007 that approved the designation. It's a slap in the face for the council of 2007, when this current council removed the designation last Monday. It was decided that council would reach out to the community and allow a chance for residents to have their say on the hall. But unfortunately the Township has limited it to a two-question survey, move the building or demolish the building. It was decided that the consultation would span two weeks. In addition to the heritage value of this building, the elimination of this building, would result in limited facilities for community groups to use. As well as a facility that could be used as a disaster relief centre. Schneider urges concerned residents to be present at the Oct. 30 council meeting. To speak, register with the clerk by 12 noon on Friday, Oct. 27. Long-time Nobleton resident Nancy Hopkinson, while pleased with the deferral, noted the short time frame is not sufficient for proper feedback. She doesn't see the importance of a hub, noting it wasn't a consideration for King City or Schomberg. She wondered why the heritage Women's Institute/Lions Club Community Hall was not being maintained. She pointed out it was built in the Depression times as a great meeting place for groups. There was no mention at the one public meeting that the

heritage building might be moved to become a storage shed in the middle of baseball fields or be demolished. Yes the hall has not been used lately because the Township itself encouraged the various groups to use other facilities. The Nobleton King City Garden Club that used the Community Hall for years and years was encouraged to move to hold their meetings to Laskay Hall. The Women's Institute ladies could not afford the cost to use the building when the rental prices increased. Hopkinson said she's been there for funeral lunches, fundraising dinners, pancake suppers put on by the Lions, as well as many Garden Club meetings. The kitchen has three stoves, and lots of storage for dishes on the lower level. Upstairs there is a little stage at one end, and a counter and fridge at the other end. Inside the building is much more attractive than the outside. The floor upstairs was upgraded to be able to have dance there. She noted that Schomberg recently had their heritage Community Hall on the Main Street upgraded. Nobleton should have its heritage Community Hall upgraded, too and be on the new Main Street. I fail to see why our heritage Community Hall cannot be upgraded, with air conditioning, excellent maintenance, an elevator. Then people would be lining up to use the Hall. Perhaps the seniors would like to use it when it is modernized, instead of the seniors being shuffled off to a corner, or being moved from pillar to post during the summer months to make way for the kids camps. Hopkinson noted as Nobleton grows, it will need more and more parkland. Selling land to developers may seem like a great idea to get money but it is a mug's game. Eventually the decision to sell land will be regretted. The cost of land continues to escalate, she said. Paving parkland is a mistake. Rethink this plan. Do not waste this great opportunity. She prefers keeping the library where it is, or moving it next to the arena.

To view the survey visit <https://speaking.king.ca/nobleton-community-hall-nobleton-women-s-institute-consultation>