

King tackles half of Sustainability Plan's immediate priorities



Last week's Sustainable King reviewed the Sustainability Plan and explained the Township and community roles in implementing it. We promised to let you know about progress being made.

King's message is being spread online and through various social media outlets. At www.sustainableking.com, you will find that King has started to tackle seven of the 14 immediate priorities that require action in the initial years of the Plan's implementation.

1. A major accomplishment is the drafting and approval last month of King's new Economic Development Strategy. You can find a 4-page quick reference guide to the strategy and the full strategy document on the www.economicking.ca blog or via the Township website king.ca. This is the first time that King has ever had such a strategy and we are optimistic that it will help our businesses to thrive and grow as well as to attract new enterprises, jobs and opportunities to the township.

Many thanks to the Chamber of Commerce and all the citizens who contributed to the various focus groups. This team effort will help King to focus on creating a balanced economy by improving its present assets while seeking out the very best new ones that are in line with King's sustainable values and principles.

2. A Sustainability Awareness Campaign has been developed to help build community engagement and this new column is part of this effort. Thank you to the King Weekly Sentinel for its support!

3. Strengthening the connection with our food and farming communities and improving access to local food is an important priority. If you look carefully in the Schomberg Foodland grocery store, for example, you will see Beretta Family Farms products. This local company offers exclusively Canadian grass fed, organic or naturally raised meat and poultry products, all without the use of antibiotics or hormones. Foodland also offers local cheeses, milk, honey and Holland Marsh vegetables in season. No Frills in Nobleton offers plants and bottled milk from Schomberg and vegetables in season from the Holland Marsh. A decision regarding carrying Beretta Farms meats is still being explored.

While you are browsing sustainableking.com, take a look at the new 5-minute video featuring The Holland Marsh. This video will help to educate the entire region about the importance of the Marsh to Toronto, York Region and all of King. It showcases who and where we are and should help to boost our economy.

We are delighted that King will have two farmers' markets this spring, summer and even early fall! One is sponsored by the Schomberg Agricultural Society and will be held on alternate Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. from June 8 to Sept. 21 at the Schomberg Fairgrounds (rain or shine). The other is sponsored by the All Saints Anglican Church in King City and will be held at the church parking lot alternate Sunday mornings from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. running June 16 to Oct. 20. Thank you to all the farmers and producers taking part and to all the dedicated volunteers making these markets happen. Please come out and support their efforts. We all now have the opportunity to buy fresh local foods every weekend all summer long!

4. Another important priority is to celebrate, promote and maintain King Township's cultural identity. Staff and volunteers are now working together to draft a Strategic Business Plan for the Museum and it expected to be finished this September. In addition, a Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Culture has been drafted and readers have provided many comments and suggestions at recent public sessions. The draft Master Plan was brought to council on June 10.

Our community fairs, church suppers, clubs, sports programs, Lions Club events, village horticultural tours, etc. and the Arts Society King (ASK) Summer Festival, including the new Family Nature Days, all showcase what makes King such a great place to live. They are all important components of King's identity and sustainability and we all owe a big thank you to all those involved. Please come and enjoy these unique events!

5. Many of you attended the Community Showcase and Volunteer Appreciation celebration at the Kingbridge Centre last month. While it has been held each May for many years, this event does link to the Sustainability Plan by giving us all an opportunity to

celebrate the accomplishments of community groups, foster collaboration and encourage new volunteers. Thank you to all our volunteers!

6. The two remaining priorities are fundamental to King's continuing success, namely financial responsibility and complying with provincial legislation. Did you know that King won distinguished national and international awards for its 2012 budget presentation and that this year's budget is balanced?

7. Whether some residents like it or not, Ontario legislation dictates that the population of King must grow. It is better to develop and follow a plan for this infill and intensification than to simply react to development applications. Such a strategy document is now being drafted.

Many more sustainability actions are under way. Some important actions and initiatives to recognize and celebrate include the following: the development being planned for southern Nobleton along Highway 27 will include a commercial building built to LEED or equivalent standards (i.e. very 'green' construction). The new homes in the subdivision across from King City Secondary School won an award for being 25% more energy efficient than the existing building code. Traffic calming measures are under way in response to public input. Financial assistance was received to re-surface the playground in Pottageville. Bike racks have been installed at four parks and a library and King has applied for a grant to help install a new 'community gateway' at the four corners in King City! Our Township is implementing its Sustainability Plan.

Your sustainability challenge: visit the sustainableking.com website. Discuss what sustainability means with your family.