

Nobleton residents request removal of sidewalk

By Angela Gismondi

Residents living on the east side of Westbrooke Boulevard in the new Fandor subdivision in Nobleton say they don't want or need a sidewalk on their side of the street.

A report was brought to the committee of the whole meeting on July 8. The residents submitted a petition to the Township's engineering and public works department to eliminate the sidewalk on Westbrooke Boulevard. While some residents on the street have moved into their new homes, the sidewalk has not been constructed yet. There are 31 properties on Westbrooke Boulevard of which 10 residents are requesting the elimination of the sidewalk. The Westbrooke Boulevard sidewalk connects the collector sidewalk from Park Heights Trail to Northcott Way.

In the report, staff recommended the request be denied, and that the developer be directed to install the sidewalk as per the approved design.

"The locations of sidewalks are designed to accommodate anticipated pedestrian movements," reads the staff report. "Continuous streets providing neighbourhood connectivity will normally be designed with sidewalks on one side."

Imma Mondaro was at the meeting as the spokesperson for the residents living on Westbrooke Boulevard.

"It's really not necessary," said Mondaro. "We are located at the back of the subdivision and the road is only frequented by the people who live there. It doesn't connect to any other street in the subdivision."

Sidewalks would cut right through the homeowners driveways and create less privacy, she said. She added that nearby Kaake Road doesn't have sidewalks and she asks that the same consideration be given to Westbrooke.

Councillor Bill Cober said he could not support the elimination of the sidewalk. He recalled an incident where a pedestrian was struck on a road that didn't have a sidewalk and the municipality was on the hook for millions of dollars because they were the ones who approved the removal of the sidewalk.

Councillor Debbie Schaefer pointed out that residents living in the older neighbourhoods in King are constantly coming to council asking for sidewalks to be installed on their streets.

"One thing the residents often bemoan is the lack of sidewalks," said Schaefer.

Mayor Steve Pellegrini was in favour of eliminating the sidewalk from the street.

"We're hearing that we're urbanizing and I don't like that, I like the rural character of King," said Pellegrini. "No sidewalks is part of the character. I think we should work with the developers and pull the sidewalk and use those funds to improve the community in another way."

Schaefer was worried about the number of pedestrians who would use the sidewalk. Local councillor Peter Grandilli urged members of council to respect the staff report and recommendations and to move forward and construct the sidewalk.

Developer Domenic Dell'Elce of Fandor Homes said there is a reason why the sidewalk was put in that particular area. He feared removing it could set a precedent. He also pointed out that not all the houses on the street are occupied yet.

"What about the purchasers that have closed on the opposite side that have sidewalks in front of them," he said. "What if they come forward and want that sidewalk. It's a community, it's not just about one street."

With that, a motion was made to approve the staff recommendation to deny the residents request to remove the sidewalk and to instruct the developer to install the sidewalk as outlined in the approved subdivision design. The motion carried.