

Residents want calming measures on Kingscross Drive

By Angela Gismondi

Residents living on Kingscross Drive in King City want to feel safe on their street.

Concerns regarding speeding and pedestrian safety were voiced by local residents at a Committee of the Whole meeting recently. On Aug. 22 staff received a petition signed by residents asking the Township to implement traffic calming measures on Kingscross Drive.

The Kings Cross subdivision was built as a rural estate residential subdivision, and as such, the roads have no sidewalks. They have narrow gravel shoulders and ditches. Because the amount of traffic on the road and excessive speed used by the drivers, residents who live in the area do not feel safe walking or cycling on the road.

The majority of the concerns expressed by the residents at the meeting focused on the volume of traffic in the subdivision and the dangerously high rates of speed of the traffic travelling through the subdivision every day.

Local resident Todd English explained that residents went door-to-door with a petition asking people if they are alarmed about the excessive traffic and speeds on Kingscross Drive. The petition reached 95 per cent of households and 100 per cent agreed that it is an issue, he said. He added the residents are hoping to work with council to find a solution that will maintain the rural character of the street while making it safe and pedestrian friendly for residents to enjoy.

"No one is looking for a Band-Aid solution here," said England. "What we want is for this to be a discussion between the township and residents. We want a sustainable solution that will potentially be a model for other streets in residential areas that have similar safety concerns."

Vanessa Braganza said she moved to the area for the quietness and to enjoy walking her dog and cycling in the area. That was before her dog was killed by a speeding car.

"As time went on we began to realize how dangerous it was becoming to do these things," she said, adding she's afraid to back out of her driveway. "We cannot safely walk along the street in our neighbourhood ... It's just a matter of time before someone gets killed on Kingscross Drive."

Mary Muter is a new resident to the area. She recalled being shocked by the noise and speeding the day she moved in. She was even more surprised to find out that the street is used for racing.

"It's used as a racing course for some people," she said. "It's known as a place to test a car's limits."

Only one local resident at the meeting did not agree traffic calming measures are needed on the street.

"I don't believe we need any further traffic calming in Kingscross," said Wilson Markle. "The road is beautifully designed to calm traffic."

He added there hasn't been a traffic incident in the subdivision in some time.

"That's not to say that they don't speed because they do, as they do everywhere else," he noted. "But it's a small percentage."

Mayor Steve Pellegrini pointed out this is not an isolated issue.

"This issue is not unique," said Pellegrini. "I know it's at home when it's on your street but unfortunately it's not the only street in the township that has this issue. I'll be delighted when we come up with a permanent solution we can implement."

According to the staff report, the petition is the first warrant and the first step of the Traffic Calming Policy for the Township of King. The second warrant is safety requirements and the third is technical requirements. Staff reviewed the petition and found that it meets the 70 per cent requirement of the first warrant of the Traffic Calming Policy. A sufficient petition requesting implementation of traffic calming measures must be signed by at least 70 per cent of households on the street.

Further study and analysis is needed in order to satisfy the remaining two warrants of the Traffic Calming Policy.

Staff also pointed out enforcement of speed limits is the responsibility of York Region Police and they should be the primary contact for residents when speeding is an issue. They also encouraged residents to use the Road Watch system which is a community-based initiative that gives residents an opportunity to report dangerous and aggressive drivers to York Regional Police. It is accessible through the website yrp.ca; email at traffic@yrp.ca; and by phone at the York Regional Police Traffic Bureau at 1-866-876-5423, ext. 7703.

A motion was made to direct staff to investigate the feasibility of installing traffic calming measures and other measures to improve pedestrian safety on Kingscross Drive and report back to council. The motion carried.