

Council endorses redevelopment for Nobleton wrecking yard

By Angela Gismondi

An old wrecking yard in Nobleton will be rehabilitated to make way for a new residential subdivision.

At a meeting Monday, council supported, in principle, the applications for a plan of subdivision and zoning bylaw amendment. In addition to endorsing the applications to speed up the process, council also delegated approval authority for technical applications to the director of planning.

The lands, owned by Nobleton Truck Wreckers Limited, Gabriele Group, are comprised of properties assembled on the north side of King Road, west of Chinook Drive. For years, the property housed a wrecking operation known as Nobleton Truck Wreckers. The applicant is proposing to develop a residential plan of subdivision on the land consisting of a range of lot sizes for single detached homes, bungalows and townhouses.

One of the major issues brought up at the meeting was the design of the road network in the proposed subdivision. The Township's engineering and public works department expressed concerns with respect to the road pattern proposed by the applicant and recommend that the streets be connected to provide a more direct route from King Road to Sheardown Drive.

Debra Kakaria, a planner representing the applicant, said the road network was designed that way on purpose and reconfiguring it would mean a fundamental change to the entire plan of subdivision.

"We wanted to mitigate any potential concern with road traffic cutting through the community," explained Kakaria, adding putting a road through the subdivision would also mean that the park in the centre of the subdivision would have to be removed.

"The park provides an interesting focal point and natural, open space for the subdivision," she noted.

While Councillor Cleve Mortelliti recognized the justifications for changing the road patterns in the subdivision, he didn't think such significant change was necessary.

"This is completely my opinion but I kind of like the labyrinth," said Mortelliti. "It works to dissuade the flow-through traffic. I think we should stay with the current proposal and maintain the road pattern that the developer set out. There has been significant public feedback on this."

Councillor Debbie Schaefer agreed.

"I too, am feeling that the proposed pattern is the way we want to go when you take into account that in the last year, we have been listening to so many residents talk about traffic calming," said Schaefer. "We need to start thinking about traffic calming as we build new subdivisions."

Nobleton resident Carol Sharer said the landowner needs to clean up the property before moving forward.

"These people need to do something to clean up the mess at this time? it's an absolute disgrace to Nobleton," said Sharer, adding the landowner has had a demolition permit for two years and the dilapidated houses on the property should have been taken down a long time ago. "We're asking that before any concessions are made for these people, that they clean up the mess."

In response to the concern, Councillor Peter Grandilli requested the owners clean up the property immediately.

"I mean as soon as possible? not next year or two years from now," said Grandilli.

A representative from the company, who was in attendance at the meeting, responded "no problem."

Schaefer also felt strongly about the proper remediation of the land and, in particular, the disposal of the soil from the land. She wants to ensure the fill is being disposed of properly at a facility licensed by the Ministry of the Environment.

"We have really been pushing that generators of fill be held accountable for where their fill is going," explained Schaefer, adding she was surprised to learn about the previous operation on the property and that the soil is likely contaminated. "I want to be setting an example and a high standard so that when this happens in other municipalities they can point to us and say "look at how that's being handled in King."

Rob Flindall, director of engineering and public works for the Township, said he was not aware the applicant had removed 600 loads of fill from the property without obtaining a site alteration permit from the municipality.

"I was not aware 600 loads had left the property already," said Flindall. "We do have a process in place and the applicant should be in compliance with the bylaw before they move forward."

He added many questions may be answered through that process.

Grandilli was also concerned with drainage on the property. Although that has not been addressed yet, Flindall said he is confident that issue will be addressed in the near future. Grandilli also asked CAO Susan Plamondon if delegating approval authority to staff is a good idea.

"I have tremendous confidence in the integrity of your staff," said Plamondon. "They will ensure this development proceeds properly and if it isn't they will report back to you. If something major happens with the plan itself, staff would have the obligation to bring that to council's attention."

Any outstanding issues can be addressed when staff brings the zoning bylaw back to council, she added.

Mortelliti pointed out that delegation of authority is common in most municipalities.

"We want to make sure we have a draft plan that fits with our community," said Mortelliti. "They are remediating a truck wrecking site that is contaminated and bringing in a residential development that is accepted by the community. I'm totally comfortable with it and happy to move it."

Council endorsed the plan of subdivision and the zoning amendment in principle with delegation of authority to staff on various technical matters. They also added that the applicant provide details about where they plan to dispose of the contaminated soil from the property to ensure that it's done properly at a licensed facility.

Planning staff will continue to review the applications, provide comments and work with the applicant to review and address outstanding issues. The zoning bylaw will be coming before council for final approval.