Dew Street development moves ahead

By Angela Gismondi

A development proposal on Dew Street in King City has undergone significant changes since it was first introduced last year, but some residents are still concerned about how it will affect the established surrounding community.

Council approved the draft plan of subdivision for the development at the council meeting Monday. The new homes will be located at the northwest corner of Dew Street and King Boulevard in an existing low density residential area in King City.

The applications were originally submitted in February 2013 and proposed 39 residential units of which 27 units were townhomes and 12 units were semi-detached. A statutory public meeting was held in June 2013 where the public expressed significant opposition to the plan, especially with respect to the proposed density. As a result, the owner undertook discussions with various stakeholders resulting in a significant change to the applications. The owner revised the plan and submitted new applications in February proposing 28 residential units composed of a mix of semi-detached and single detached units. The initial proposal also included a thru street connection from Dew Street to King Boulevard but the applicant changed the thru-road to a cul-de-sac with access to King Boulevard only.

Murray Evans, a planning consultant and agent for the landowner, explained the plan has been revised to address the concerns of the existing community.

?The plan has changed quite noticeably in its character and features,? said Evans, adding a number of public consultations were held and the feedback from resident has been incorporated into the revised plan. ?Through the information exchange process, it became clear that there were some issues with density, compatibility with the existing community and safety.?

His client is now proposing a development that is more appropriate for the location, he explained.

?With the help of staff, we've come up with a plan that will provide a very nice transition and a very nice street front along King Boulevard,? Evans said. ?It provides different types of housing in a very small area in what I believe is a good location for this ? near schools, high schools, transit and shops.?

From a density point of view, the developer has gone from 39 units to 28 units.

?It's more in keeping with what is existing on the street,? he added.

In addition, the developer has agreed to build a sidewalk along Dew Street and King Boulevard which will address the safety concerns for children walking to school.

Resident Peter Nufrio is particularly concerned with the location of the storm water management pond, which he argued is right in his backyard.

?That is not acceptable,? said Nufrio. ?If the pond overflows, it will go on my property. Nobody can guarantee that's not going to happen. Put it in someone else's backyard. Other residents don't care but I do ? At the end of the day, if there is an issue I'm stuck with it.?

He doesn't see the project as intensification.

?I see this as suffocation,? he stated. ?This is Maple or Woodbridge or whatever you want to call it. This is not King anymore ? I feel like I'm being punished. I chose to live in King but now it feels like I'm being forced out.?

He also argued that he was kept in the dark and that ?it was all done behind closed doors.?

King City Councillor Mortelliti pointed out that a number of public consultations were held. He suggested that while other residents may not necessarily support the development, they recognize that it is a better fit than what was initially proposed.

?I don't know that it's accurate to say all residents are pleased with this because I think what they would like is to see no development across the street from them,? said Mortelliti, adding the developer held a number of public meetings to obtain input from residents. ?The plan that came out of that discussion ? I think they recognize this is a better plan for their area than the original plan that was proposed.?

The discussion resulted in a collaborative approach, he noted.

?The real win was our collaboration with the community and the willingness to work with the developer, knocking down the density, to make it fit with the community a little bit more,? said Mortelliti, adding a refusal in the application could have resulted in the applicant taking the matter to the Ontario Municipal Board where the decision would be taken out of the Township's hands.

Intensification is mandated by the province and the proposed area is within the boundary. ?It's pretty difficult for me to say I can't support this when we worked so hard it get it where it is ? I think we have to recognize as a council that this is a win in comparison to what was initially proposed.?

With respect to the resident's concern regarding drainage issues and overflow of the storm water management pond spilling onto his

property, Mortelliti said there are no guarantees but that the system is designed to draw water away from the properties. He added that the ponds are an industry accepted practice and that they are designed to mitigate flooding in subdivisions.

Evans explained the pond is in that location because there is an existing culvert there which allows the water to flow under the road and the rail line and empty into an open space.

?It's not going into the delegate's backyard, it's going into a pipe that is already in place,? explained Evans. ?There is water flowing at the present time into that pipe. The pond will collect water in a storm event and allows the water to leave the pond area at a controlled rate.?

Council approved the staff recommendations for draft approval of the subdivision plan, adoption of the official plan amendment and enactment of the implementing zoning by-law subject to the conditions of draft approval. As a condition of draft plan approval, Mortelliti requested that the developer install a privacy fence along the western boundary of the development.

?I hope the developer is agreeable to that,? said Mortelliti. ?I don't think it's a huge cost and it provides a better buffer to the adjacent properties.?