

CIP funding program moves forward

By Mark Pavilons

King's commitment to beautifying its communities took a step forward, thanks to a decision by council recently.

Councillors received a report from Jamie Smyth, economic development officer, laying down the groundwork for a grants program under the Community Improvement Plan (CIP).

Smyth will administer the CIP program and staff will create a review committee consisting of staff from finance and planning.

Program promotional material, forms and details of the actual process were also approved.

The CIP process takes a long-term approach to village revitalization in Schomberg, Nobleton and King City. Real change takes time, Smyth noted, adding small changes will all add up to big ones over time.

As we move toward implementing the CIP's financial incentives program during the first year of what could be a 10-year program, it's important to achieve some 'quick wins' that will set the tone and create momentum.

'It is ... essential for the Financial Incentives Program application and approval process to be nimble, responsible, efficient and aligned with property and business owners' decision-making cycles,' Smyth wrote in his report.

The process for applying for financial incentives involves three steps. First, applicants meet with Smyth; submit their application which he then confirms or requests further information. Then the review committee meets to go through the application and makes its decision.

Successful applications will then result in an agreement being prepared and signed and it will outline any conditions on the funding.

Once the project is complete, the applicant submits final details and photographs of the work. The grant is then paid by the Township upon confirmation that everything was completed in accordance with the conditions of the agreement.

Smyth said he hopes the process for each application will take two months or less.

The marketing and promotion of this program will begin shortly, so business and property owners can get all the details.

Types of things that fit the criteria include facade and signage improvements; landscaping; building accessibility; parking; property conversion or repurposing; rebates for planning and building permits and property tax rebates.

Property owners and tenants can apply and only mixed use, commercial and institutional properties are eligible for grants.

Residential properties are only eligible for certain grants.

For 2015, a total of \$30,000 has been set aside for these improvements. The CIP grant reserve fund will be reviewed on an annual basis.

For more on the program, contact Smyth at 905-833-4016 or email jsmyth@king.ca.