

Ansnorveldt residents make concerns known

By Mark Pavilons

Ansnorveldt may be a small, quiet hamlet in northern King, but make no mistake, its residents are very engaged.

A vocal group of roughly 30 people attended the annual Meet the Mayor & Ward Councillors night, held at the library. Avia Eek and Mayor Steve Pellegrini were on hand for one-on-one discussions of local issues. They came away with a laundry list of concerns that ranged from a lack of high-speed Internet and poor road conditions, to property standards issues.

Several residents are concerned about the aesthetics along the main street and criticized local bylaw enforcement for not making residents clean up their lots. Eek had a list of cases with her, many of which have been closed. She noted she tends to get the calls from residents and then directs staff. She doesn't want these issues to result in conflict between neighbours.

One man is adamant that the issue be addressed. He noted there is construction debris at both ends of the hamlet – not a very welcoming sight at all. People are getting fed up, he said, and want something done. Many are what he called ‘repeat offenders’ and he complained about numerous derelict vehicles on properties. There's a concern about leaking fluids, near precious farmland.

Regarding the property standards concerns, Eek said there seems to be a mind set by some ‘new’ residents that because they have a large property, they can use it for purposes other than agriculture, such as landscaping companies who bring various kinds of debris/garbage to be disposed of here in the Specialty Crop Area; car/truck scrap yard; people who accumulate ‘stuff’ which creates an ‘eyesore’ to residents living nearby. Many of the properties identified by residents as being in violation of our property standards bylaw are currently being investigated, Eek said.

One particularly bright spot during the steady flow of residents was a visit by local teenagers.

Rev. Richard Bodini, of Holland Marsh Christian Reformed Church, led several youngsters from his Catechism class to learn about civic leaders and government.

Mayor Pellegrini was more than happy to speak to them.

He first encouraged them all to volunteer, to get closer to their community. Through sports or helping out in some way in their own communities, they will get a better sense of what it means to live in King.

There's a tremendous amount of satisfaction from helping people, ‘the same reason I'm in public office.

‘Keep the passion and stay connected with your community,’ the mayor told them.

They also wanted to know how local taxes help youth.

The mayor explained that King is responsible for collecting property taxes, but only gets to keep a small portion. Of the average assessment of roughly \$6,000, 45% goes to York Region, another 22% to the school boards and 33% to King Township. So of that \$6,000 tax bill, King gets only \$2,000 to pay for fire service, libraries, municipal roads, arenas, snow removal, etc.

For that amount, King residents are getting great value for their tax dollars, he pointed out.

Eek asked these teens to email her with suggestions to make the community more appealing and a list of programs that would interest them.

‘Engaging the residents, obtaining their viewpoints is the best way to make sure we, as a council, are on the right track and paying attention to the issues/concerns for each ward, as the needs vary throughout King Township,’ said Eek.

Other issues that were raised were large amounts of fill being brought into this regulated flood plain area for new residential buildings that are ‘out of character’ for this community. A couple of people expressed a concern about customer service at our municipal offices. There was a discussion about the possibility of using the berm created through the canal relocation project as some kind of linkage to our trail system, along with how we could prevent motorized vehicles from tearing around on any future potential trails.

On many people's minds was when Miller Sideroad will be reconstructed. Eek said it's in the 10-year capital plan and is slated for reconstruction in 2016.

‘I will be following up on the issues brought to my attention with the appropriate staff, and then reporting back to the individual residents with respect to measures that may be taken to address their concerns,’ she said.

‘My door is always open, as is Mayor Pellegrini's to respond to any concerns you may have as residents of King Township. I am never further away than your phone, or electronic device. If you are a Ward 6 resident, and are not currently on my e-mail contact list, please feel free to contact me, and I will add you aek@king.ca.’