

King council supports local solar projects

By Mark Pavilons

King councillors have given their support to several local solar projects.

Those seeking access to the Feed-In Tarrif (FIT) program benefit from municipal council support for their applications. The Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) requires that councils pass site-specific resolutions for each project, in order to obtain Priority Points.

Council gave their endorsement for several ground and roof-mounted solar projects in the area.

The Region of York plans to install 1,000 ground-mounted, 250kW panels at the Schomberg Water Resource Recovery Facility (sewage treatment) at 5 Dillane Drive. These will occupy 1.6 acres of land that was previously used as a sand filtration bed. King staff believes it won't create a significant visual impact to area landowners. The nearest dwelling is some 500 metres away. Kinghaven Farms asked for support for several roof and ground panels. In all, they plan 1,453 rooftop panels on the north half of their equine training facility; 1,453 on the south half; 249 rooftop panels on the track barn roof and 2,000 ground panels on paddocks.

Again, staff doesn't see any negative impacts from this. Kinghaven already has many of these in place.

Cardinal Golf Course on Highway 9 had asked for support as well, but Township staff didn't have enough time to properly evaluate the impacts. In the report, by planning director Stephen Kitchen, their plan calls for panels on the south side of the clubhouse building. The steep slope and curve of the roof is one the main architectural features of the building, but it also presents a challenge. Staff believe the panels may impact on the local landscape since they would be quite visible from Highway 9. There is also a concern the panels may reflect sunlight and present a driving hazard for motorists. Staff recommended against giving Cardinal an endorsement.

This didn't sit too well with Councillor Avia Eek, who urged her councillors to reconsider.

She said King often asks businesses to consider green initiatives and she doesn't share the staff concerns with Cardinal's bid. The panels won't affect the rural character and the research she's done indicates the panels aren't reflective and won't present any sort of hazard for motorists.

Council directed staff to continue discussions with Cardinal on the matter.