

Zoning change first step in sale of municipal property

By Mark Pavilons

A change in zoning is the first step in preparing the current municipal office site for sale.

With the construction of the new municipal centre under way, King will sell its current home – the strip plaza on King Road and Banner Lane. To help facilitate the sale, and provide options in keeping with the King City Community Plan, council gave staff the go-ahead to look into rezoning the property.

The 2.5-acre property with some 125 metres of frontage on King Road, is currently a mixed use commercial building.

The application will rezone the lands from Shopping Centre Commercial (C4) to a new Core Area (King City) CA-KC zone, to permit a variety of uses, including multi-unit residential. It also provides site-specific provisions for parking, building requirements, waste storage, setbacks, etc.

While the fire hall is part of the parcel, it's not included in these zoning changes.

This property was originally a commercial plaza in the 1970s and the Township bought it in 1999, converting several units to the current municipal offices. The fire hall was built in 2001.

The Township became aware of a problem in 2012 of fuel oil (hydrocarbon) contamination on the lands. Measures were taken to reveal the extent of the problem. Remediation and monitoring was also carried out. The problem still persists, and the Ministry of the Environment has advised that the best way to fully remediate the site is through demolition and a total rebuild.

Planning director Stephen Kitchen did stress the contamination is confined to a portion of the property, and it has not leached beyond the site.

The Provincial Policy Statement and local plans do support intensification in this area, and it has been identified by the Township as a site for residential intensification.

The property is deemed Core Area in the King City Community Plan, which recognizes such places as a focal point for commercial, residential and community uses.

The Core Area does provide guidelines for new development, which includes a three-storey height limit and maximum floor area. It also stresses the aesthetics should be in keeping with the character of the community.

Maintaining and strengthening of the Core Area as a focal point in the community is a key objective of the King City Community Plan, according to the planning report. The Plan identifies objectives to foster the economic health of existing and new businesses; provide choice in terms of secure, adequate and affording housing types; and encourages development at a pedestrian scale and orientation.

The current bylaw establishes minimum acceptable standards. Specific details of the site (design elements, parking, etc.) will come later on, during a subsequent site plan application process.

Resident Bruce Craig praised the potential of the site, noting it's an ideal location to reflect the principles of the community plan. There's a growing need for different housing types in King and he hopes to see some of these come to fruition in the new development.

The changes for the site will provide an opportunity for alternative residential forms.

A Banner Lane resident said he's worried that parking will be expanded at the rear of the property. Mayor Steve Pellegrini pointed out this is only the very preliminary stage in the property's evolution and those details will come later on.

Anne Raney echoed Craig's sentiments, noting she hopes to see housing options appear.

Councillor Debbie Schaefer also shares the hope for more residential options, perhaps suited to seniors.