

Seneca's expansion comes as good news to King council

By Mark Pavilons

The expansion of the King Campus of Seneca College is moving full steam ahead. And that comes as great news to the Township. King councillors voted to approve the site plan application, allowing Seneca to move forward with the construction of its 200,000-square-foot addition.

Officials and dignitaries gathered recently to announce a \$3-million donation to the project from Magna International. The \$104-million project has been backed by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development and Minister Deb Matthews. Councillors heard from Seneca President David Agnew, who presented a video on what the new facility will look like.

The project has been a long time coming, he said, noting the campus had its beginnings in 1971, with Garriock Hall arriving in 1977. A 2013 study revealed an expansion was necessary and work began. The college recently completed some internal roads works and the expansion is "very exciting."

Agnew noted the high-efficiency building will be LEED® Gold and contain a vast array of "neat stuff."

Seneca's consultants, EllisDon® Capital Inc., will have to submit various approvals from the Ministry of the Environment and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, before a building permit is issued.

The application is for the three-storey building, 450-vehicle parking lot, internal roads, landscaping, stormwater management features, etc.

This is part of the long-term implementation of the King Campus Master Plan that began in 2010.

Part of the long-term plans include revamping and repurposing the historic Eaton Hall.

Hopes are the new building will be ready for occupancy by late 2017 or early 2018. The Township also reviewed an application for site alteration to allow for the initial internal works.

Seneca is located within the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan area and even though it's considered a major development, it won't have any negative impacts. Hydrogeological assessments will be needed to satisfy both the ORMCP and King's Official Plan. The proposed building is a flat-roofed, rectangular structure, measuring 580 feet long and 177 feet wide. The main entrance will be on the north side across from Garriock Hall. The building will house educational facilities, student activity and learning space and a library. The southern portion will be home to a gym and fitness centre.

Roughly 69 trees will have to be removed for the construction, but a tree replanting program has been identified.

There's a lot of excitement for Seneca's evolution in King.

Mayor Steve Pellegrini called the design "outstanding," noting Seneca is a "tremendous partner in King." Seneca staff is always engaged in the community.

Councillor Cleve Mortelliti noted it's a pleasure to work with Seneca staff and sharing in their vision. "This is quite the legacy," he observed.