

Plans for Nobleton strip mall moving forward

By Mark Pavilons

Responding to input from residents, the proponent of a Nobleton strip mall has made substantial changes and improvements to the design, making it much more palatable.

King council hosted a public meeting on a bid by Condor Properties to amend the zoning bylaw to rezone the lands to permit the commercial operation.

The changes are necessary to permit the strip mall on the 1.25-acre parcel at the southwest corner of Highway 27 and Mactaggart. The original application went to council back in 2015 and several concerns were raised by staff and members of the public. Since the initial proposal, council approved the new Nobleton zoning bylaw and the applicant revised their plans with this in mind. The proposed 31,000-square-foot, three-storey building is oriented to the intersection and will provide for an attractive, pedestrian-oriented atmosphere. This new plan includes a smaller footprint, modified setbacks and a more aesthetically pleasing building.

The plan calls for 72 parking spots and 20 bicycle parking spots as well. Landscaping will feature plantings and benches.

A two-metre retaining wall and privacy fence is planned for the boundaries that face existing homes.

Planning department staff are still reviewing the proposal and comments from various agencies. They will report back to council with their recommendations at a later date.

Mayor Steve Pellegrini lauded this newest version, noting the proponents listened to the public. The original plan called for a drive-thru which many opposed. The mayor said he'd like to see the addition of a gateway feature at the northeast corner of the property, welcoming motorists to Nobleton.

Davide Pellegrini, a representative of Condor Properties, said they removed the drive-thru and underground parking concepts from the original proposal. The zoning permits many uses, and he said at this point they're likely looking at offices, a day care and perhaps a bakery. They tried to increase the pedestrian access to the site and this plan is much more functional.

Ken Kruck, of ACK Architects Inc., said the design has evolved into a much "softer, quaint" project, giving it a "main street feel." He said the exterior of parts of the new building are inspired by the historic Hambly House, which struck them as "architecturally interesting."

Councillor Debbie Schaefer was pleased the design elements reflect the character of the community.

A 21-year resident who borders the property said this will have a big impact on them. She appreciates the improvements made from the first submission, but is still concerned this mall will generate a lot of local traffic. As it is, residents park on Mactaggart, instead of using the church lot and she believes this will increase when the new mall arrives.

Former councillor Peter Grandilli said he supports the concept, adding he'd like to see even more in the way of planters, benches and interlock walkways, making it appealing to residents and pedestrians.

Resident Susan Beharriell lauded the applicant for listening to resident concerns, and she suggested the facility incorporate as many "green" elements as possible.

Councillor Bill Cober asked staff to look at upgrading the sidewalk from Sheardown to Mactaggart, suggesting King creates a joint partnership with York Region on this much-needed improvement.