

New zoning bylaw discussed by council, public

By Mark Pavilons

Consultants are putting the finishing touches on King's new comprehensive zoning bylaw for its three major urban centres. While this long overdue document will set the stage for years to come, some apprehension, and a chicken-and-the-egg scenario regarding an appeal to Nobleton's bylaw, raised concerns around King's council table.

A number of Nobleton residents packed the council chambers April 3, worried that changes in the new bylaw will curtail certain property rights. Several residents, who addressed council on the matter, also claimed they weren't given proper notification and detailed information on this important document. They asked for further consultation with property owners.

Bobby Gauthier, from consulting planners MMM Group, noted there have been many revisions to the zoning bylaw for Schomberg, Nobleton and King City Urban Areas since it was made public March 14. Consultants were driven by key issues ? core area zoning, the character of established neighbourhoods, and a special policy area around the King City GO station lands.

Zoning policies have been updated in village core areas and Schomberg received a special policy area due to the presence of the floodplain. Gauthier said they've brought the zoning bylaw into conformity with the Oak Ridges Moraine Plan; addressed core parking issues and updated TRCA regulations, largely in King City. The ORMP affects only King City and the very northern portion of Nobleton.

A new section was added to address landform conservation, aquifer vulnerability and wellhead protection.

Council has the task of deciding just how to proceed. Gauthier said councillors can consider integrating Nobleton at a later date, once the appeal to its zoning bylaw is concluded. Staff indicated this should be taken care of shortly.

Gauthier pointed out King's Official Plan review is still in progress, and the new zoning bylaw supports broader strategic principles such as economic development, sustainability and customer service.

The final draft should be available for council's approval by late April or early May.

If the Nobleton appeal doesn't come soon enough, Gauthier said the best way to proceed is to approve the King City and Schomberg portions of the bylaw.

A representative of a Schomberg property owner asked for council to consider site-specific considerations for a property that's being eyed for development on Highway 27.

A representative of several Nobleton residents said they believe the zoning bylaw is premature. He said property owners need to know the exact impacts on commercial properties.

Former Nobleton councillor Peter Grandilli said many core property owners are not aware of the bylaw's intricacies. He asked for another information session to bring owners up to speed.

One resident argued the new proposed setback rules will result in more applications to the committee of adjustment, making more work for staff.

Another man said he had difficulty finding the information on the zoning bylaw. He was adamant that residents be contacted by the Township (and via mail) regarding meetings and be sent a copy of the bylaw.

Mayor Steve Pellegrini said all of the information is accessible on the Township's website. The process in coming up with the new bylaw has been laborious. He took offence to people suggesting the municipality wasn't open and transparent in this matter.

Planning director Stephen Kitchen said there have been ample opportunities for the public to participate in the process.