

Councillor wants to combat illegal grow-ops

By Mark Pavilons

The proliferation of illegal marijuana grow-ops in King has councillors concerned.

The situation is especially bad in the Holland Marsh area, and Ward 6 Councillor Avia Eek wants something done about it. She noted that they're not only illegal, operating without the required permits, but they're impacting neighbours and other agricultural operations. The odor in particular is actually affecting other farmers in the Marsh, a key growing area known as the 'salad bowl' of Ontario.

She would like the two-year-old bylaw updated and wants more emphasis on stopping the illegal cannabis operations.

Staff member Gaspare Ritacca noted the existing bylaw does not allow grow ops in the Marsh.

King, according to Mayor Steve Pellegrini, was one of the first municipalities to pass a bylaw, restricting such operations. This is a federal initiative, he pointed out, that has been 'shoved' down municipalities' throats.

King does have strict bylaws and the matter has become more than an annoyance. The federal decision to make cannabis legal has left a mess for municipalities to clean up. He suggested that King reaches out to, and lobby, its MPs.

Councillors and staff welcomed the idea of a holding a workshop or public open house regarding the issue.