

Environmental concerns over Schomberg subdivision plan

By Mark Pavilons

A new subdivision proposal in downtown Schomberg may drastically alter the floodplain.

And that has residents, and the conservation authority, concerned.

King council hosted a public meeting on a proposal for 51 residential lots on Roselena Drive, known as Forestbrook Hills Phase 2.

The project would see the extension of Roselena to Church Street. This is a planned phase of the existing subdivision that was approved back in 1999. The plans have been on the books for some time and residents aren't so much concerned with the development as a whole, but with the impacts on the floodplain, and a tributary of the Schomberg Creek.

The property is zoned low density residential under the existing Schomberg Community Plan.

Two properties under two owners will come together in this proposal. The lands consist of contrasting topography and include a valley, wooded area and the river.

Staff noted a portion of the lands are designed as environmental constraint area and lands along the river exhibit inherent hazards, such as flooding, erosion and poor drainage. There are also some natural wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas.

Staff stressed that comments and input from the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) are integral in this proposal.

Access to the lands will be from a 450-metre extension of Roselena to Church and this road will cross the river. This would require an accepted type of crossing, such as a Con/Span bridge, which would have the least impact on the watercourse.

Part of the proposal includes filling in the floodplain to improve the grades and lessen the impact of flooding.

Staff pointed out that adjustment of the floodline using fill and the requirements of the crossing are very detailed engineering matters and they are relying on the LSRCA for their input.

The connection of Roselena to Church is supported by the community plan and will also serve as an important looping of the water service. A traffic study is needed to determine the impacts of increased vehicles.

Overall, staff have identified several issues that require further discussion. Once staff have received comments from various agencies, particularly the LSRCA, they can report back to council.

Dan Stone, a planning consultant representing the applicants, said this phase has been in the works for years. They're working with LSRCA to address the stormwater management issues. They've done an exhaustive number of studies and reports on the property, but he admitted there are more things to iron out. They hope to return to council later this year for draft plan approval.

They will do their best to mitigate the construction impacts. Stone also said there has been a lot of public interest in the homes being planned for the neighbourhood.

One Roselena resident said he's concerned about traffic and speeding along the street. He would like the Township to look at some traffic calming measures.

A Church Street resident, whose property abuts the proposed development, said this plan should respect the context of the community. She sees this as an overbuild of the site and is worried about flooding on this extremely sensitive site. She urged council that every care and consideration be taken before anything takes place on this property. She asked council to scale back the plan and do the right thing.

A Rebellion Way resident said she's concerned about impacts to their wells and she asked for a water table study.

Councillor Bill Cober observed that a lot hinges on what LSRCA has to say about the plans. Their input will guide the next steps, he said.

Councillor Debbie Schaefer is concerned with the changes to the floodplain and the amount of fill proposed. Given the changes to our climate in recent years, she believes the flood measures should be updated and expanded.

Councillor Cleve Mortelliti said since the LSRCA has authority over floodplain alteration, the ball is in their court.

Both Schaefer and Mortelliti would like to see a mix of housing options, including semis and towns, but they want to avoid an OPA process.