

Increased densities pave the way for King City development

By Mark Pavilons

A large portion north of King City will become home to King's next biggest residential development.

King councillors gave their preliminary approval an Official Plan amendment, providing for increased densities of seven units per hectare, giving a group of developers and landowners the green light to prepare and fine-tune their concept plans. It also allows for minor reductions in the environmental buffers and minimum protection zones.

In the application by the King City East Landowners Group, densities and buffers are key. These have been thoroughly debated at council over the past months. There are several plans to create homes in the 204-hectare parcel (504 acres) that stretches from Dufferin west to Keele; King Road, north to the 15th Sideroad.

At the May public meeting, major concerns included loss of agricultural land, increased densities and population.

Norm Elmhirst once again appeared before council, opposing any potential extension of Tawes Trail to Keele. It was noted the Region of York has since dropped this idea.

Steve Papaikonomou is currently a non-participating landowner but he said he intends to develop his lands.

Planning director Stephen Kitchen noted it would be beneficial for all landowners to work together and join forces on this area's evolution.

Resident Peter Iaboni is upset by the potential loss of a forested area off of East Humber Drive. Citizens have been actively protecting this mature area for many years and even fought previous applications at the OMB.

Don Givens, representing the King City East Landowners Group, said they've been working with staff, to the point it's coming together and moving in the right direction.

He said the group will work with the landowner to respect the woodlot and work on an alternative.

Councillor Cleve Mortelliti said this is a significant decision on densities.

Councillor Debbie Schaefer said she's pleased that some concepts show a mixed variety of housing types, something that's lacking in King. The plans call for seniors-oriented housing as well.

Staff was also asked to increase the percentages of mixed housing, upwards of 15% to allow for more towns and condos in the mix.

The density increase in King City's greenfield area will ensure King meets the 2031 population targets mandated by the Province.

Minor increases or decreases could be considered on a site-specific basis. King has an intensification target of 920 units through 2031, 546 of which are moving forward. It's recommended that 457 of those be planned for King City, and the remaining 89 directed to Schomberg.

King City remains as the top contender for the simple fact that Nobleton lacks servicing capacity for more growth at this time.

Capacity is currently restricted to 6,590 people and when current projects are built out, that number will be reached.

Looking ahead, if these lands are developed at the proposed intensities, King City will grow to 14,000 people from its projected 12,000 level by 2031.

Regarding the buffer zones, King maintains its region-leading 30-metre guidelines. However, this application has been revised, seeking minor reductions in five specific locations. The boundary of the feature/buffer presents unique configurations and challenges to the adjacent lot fabric.

This is all very early in the process. The review and approval of these projects will be addressed through future amendments and draft plans of subdivision. Only preliminary design review has taken place so far and focused on broader issues.

Several parcels are involved and a few present their own challenges. In his report, Kitchen said the Entas property and portions of the King Rocks property have significant access limitations which may present a challenge to achieve a design with multiple access points and, therefore, more difficult to rationalize a higher number of units within those areas.

The York Region District School Board has said they will require a future school site within this area.