

King City severance bid refused

By Mark Pavilons

The majority of King Township councillors are not swaying from their opposition to severances within established communities. Despite receiving support from Councillors Bill Cober and Linda Pabst, the rest of council voted to side with staff, and refuse a Warren Road application by Mark and Liina Peacock.

The application, for an OP and bylaw amendments, centres around their .52-acre property at 325 Warren, east of Banner Lane. The goal is to split the lot into two parcels and create a new driveway. The new lot would be home to a two-storey house with an attached, two-car garage. While frontage doesn't appear to be an issue, the lot would not meet the bylaw's minimum lot area of 1,400 square metres.

The Peacocks previously submitted an application for a minor variance to the Committee of Adjustment in 2010. That bid was also refused.

Brad Rogers, agent for the Peacocks, argued their plan meets many of the planning tests and he's wondering why staff recommended refusal. They gathered input and information from various consultations and public meetings and agency feedback. We believe it fits the character of the community, Rogers said, noting the proposal meets frontage and setback requirements. He said staff conceded that the character of Warren Road has been changing over the years.

Resident Harry Dahme was adamant the proposal should be refused, noting permitting this application would set a precedent and residents who own lots of similar sizes would rush out to sever their lots, too.

He reiterated council's previous stance that prohibited infilling in established subdivisions, noting this bid is not consistent with the fabric of the neighbourhood.

Councillor Debbie Schaefer said she's struggled with this particular application, noting it simply doesn't conform to policies within the bylaw.

Councillor Cober had a different take, noting he never sees any case as precedent-setting. Every application should be reviewed on its own merits. From a streetscape perspective, he said this plan has merit. He asked staff if their stance was defensible, should the matter go before the Ontario Municipal Board.

Planning director Stephen Kitchen is confident the staff report is sound and they made the right recommendations.

Councillor Pabst said she finds this application totally acceptable for that community. She told her colleagues the Township will likely lose at the OMB.

Councillor Cleve Mortelliti had no qualms, noting he's been a vocal opponent to severances in established subdivisions. He said the Township's approach to these issues has evolved over the past decade and only now are they dealing with the issue of changing old, stable neighbourhoods. His stance, and staff's backing, provides a context for such decisions.

He favours drawing the line and directing infilling elsewhere in King. Once the Township has a new Official Plan and new bylaw, Mortelliti said he'd be happy to review cases on an individual basis.

For him, supporting this bid's refusal, was easy.

In the staff report, it was noted while there was some support of the application from residents, most were against it. Opposition included an incompatibility with the neighbourhood; drainage and easement issues; and non-conformity with existing plans.

The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act notes the property is located within an area of high aquifer vulnerability and within 120 metres of a sensitive watercourse.

The bottom line, according to staff is the proposed division of 325 Warren Road into two lots is not consistent with the overall parcel fabric character of the neighbourhood.