

King's CIP program gets a shot in the arm

By Mark Pavilons

Leveraging some provincial funding, King's Community Improvement Plan (CIP) grant program will help bolster even more projects.

Council gave its Economic Development Department the okay to allocate \$15,000 from the Ontario's Main Street Revitalization Initiative (OMSRI) to the CIP program, in order to continue carrying out the program for the remainder of 2018.

The Province has made a total of \$59,330 available to King for revitalization efforts that benefit small businesses. Shifting the \$15,000 from that amount to the CIP program will guarantee the program's success through the end of the fiscal year.

Staff noted local business inquiries continue to escalate and some are beyond the criteria eligible for financial incentives. Staff would like to enlarge the scope of the CIP, but suggested it wait until the program has been in place for five years, taking us to the end of 2019.

The CIP, staff observed, takes a long-term approach to revitalization. This change will take time and it is best accomplished through incremental, small improvements that will add up to big changes over time.

Council adopted the CIP for King City, Nobleton and Schomberg in 2014. Staff said there are roughly 180 businesses in village cores that could be eligible for CIP funds.

The idea is to provide funds to encourage property owners to improve their building facades. Over the CIP's 38-month history, 18 businesses have benefited from funding. So far in 2018, five applicants received a total of \$56,000.

From 2015-2017, \$102,608 was distributed to 16 grant recipients and the remaining \$12,611 was allocated to a CIP reserve fund.

The OMSRI funding has given staff the confidence to review applications for the rest of the year, all in an effort for the revitalization and the improvement of small businesses in King.

Economic Development Officer Jamie Smyth said the current funding meets the demand and puts them in a comfortable position.