

King's comprehensive efforts are paying off

By Mark Pavilons

King Township has spent a great deal of time and effort creating well crafted master plans and strategies. It's all in an attempt to help plan for the future and make King attractive to prestige employment.

And their efforts are paying off, big time.

That message was delivered last week at the annual Mayor's Lunch, put on by the King Chamber of Commerce, hosted at the Cardinal Golf Club.

Chamber president Tom Allen noted it was good to see a diversity of attendees. There has been a flurry of activity in recent months, with anniversaries, milestones and new business openings being celebrated across the township.

For its part, the Chamber tries to create networking opportunities for its members. Allen said they also ensure they have a solid working relationship with the municipality.

He said members have plenty of opportunities to provide input, during the current reviews of several important documents, such as the Official Plan, Nobleton zoning bylaw, regional plans and the provincial review into the environmental plans.

The self-admitted "king of superlatives," Mayor Steve Pellegrini, thanked the Chamber for its ongoing partnership. He introduced councillors and Township staff, urging Chamber members to make use of the Township's economic development office.

King has been successful in attracting business and the newest piece de resistance is the news that Magna International is building its corporate headquarters at King Road and Jane Street.

"Being investment-ready allows us to attract (businesses like) Magna," he said.

Everyone is thrilled by Magna's arrival and the potential economic spinoff that will result.

As well, the mayor explained that Magna initially plans to only use one-third of its 105-acre property, leaving the rest for the future, perhaps for complementary, businesses or ancillary uses.

"Down the road, others will come," the mayor said. "The economic spinoff is huge."

Being a "numbers guy," the mayor said King remains a destination of choice for homeowners. It's the most affluent community in the country and in 2014 boasted an average house price of roughly \$978,603, some 43% higher than the average across York Region. Building starts in 2014 and through the first quarter of 2015 remain strong.

The mayor is also excited about the long-anticipated, \$100-million expansion at Seneca College's King Campus. This will present even more spinoff benefits to the community.

He mentioned the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) for King City, Schomberg and Nobleton. It's an exciting initiative to promote beautification, property improvements and economic development. It provides financial incentives to property owners and to invest locally. He urged residents to take advantage of the limited funding available. For more, contact King's ECO at 905-833-4016 or ecdev@king.ca.

"This is for you," he told the audience.

The Township will soon release its first concrete measures to promote tourism - a micro website and series of vignettes or commercials promoting King and all that it offers.

From the Nobleton zoning bylaw, Official Plan review and draft transportation master plan, King is by no means finished with its guiding documents.

"The train keeps coming," Pellegrini said. "We're not stopping."

He also encourages the community to get behind the excitement of the Pan Am Games, and join the fun during a special day in King, when the torch comes to King City June 25.

The mayor also said the Chamber advocates and works with the Township on many issues. He also wants residents and business owners to fully utilize the Township's resources.

"We're on the same team," he said. "We all want you to be prosperous."

The goal, he said, is never-ending and there's more to do.

"I'm pumped," he said.

Allen added that everyone wants King to be a great place to live, work and play, focussing on the work part.