

King's Den subdivision gets the green light

By Angela Gismondi

A new subdivision in King City is moving forward thanks to a collaborative effort between Signature Communities and existing residents. Having a [popular master-planned subdivision](#) in development is a great step forward for the existing residents, and the residents coming to live there, it'll create a wider community, and more homes for families etc. who want to live in a beautiful area. At the council meeting Monday, King councillors approved the application for the draft plan of subdivision, adopted the official plan amendment and enacted the zoning bylaw for Signature's King's Den subdivision.

Using a unique, collaborative approach, Signature Communities worked with residents in the neighbouring subdivision to create a development all parties can live with.

'I'm pleased that the community and the developer were able to work together and come up with a plan that fits,' said Councillor Cleve Mortelliti.

The subdivision will be located on the southwest corner of Keele Street and McClure Drive in King City. The developer has proposed 18 lots for single detached dwellings with access from a new public road, a cul-de-sac, off of McClure Drive. The draft plan also includes an open space block at the corner of Keele and McClure which will act as a gateway to the community.

A previous submission for the development proposed four single detached dwellings and 45 townhome units under a condominium form of ownership. A statutory public meeting was held in December 2011 where the public voiced opposition to the proposed plan, particularly with the density and the types of homes proposed. After the meeting, the owner undertook discussions with surrounding residents regarding their concerns resulting in a fundamental change to the applications. The owner submitted new applications in November 2013, revising the proposal from 45 to 18 lots.

'This has really come along in achieving what the existing community wants in their front yard,' said Councillor Debbie Schaefer, thanking the residents in the existing McClure subdivision and Signature Communities for coming together to create a development everyone can agree on. 'I think we've got a good development here that's going to add a lot to King City.'

Jeff Brookhouser, a resident living adjacent to the proposed subdivision, was part of the group that worked with the developer to provide input on the design for the new community. On behalf of the McClure Keele Area Ratepayers Group, he asked that council consider removing the sidewalks from the subdivision in order to encourage driveway parking as opposed to on-street parking. He added that the issue of landscaping has not yet been addressed and that the fences along Keele Street should be in keeping with the character of those of the existing neighbourhood. He also asked that the more mature trees on the property be saved and relocated. He requested that existing residents be kept apprised of any discussion regarding these issues.

'We have not been included in any of those discussions to date,' he noted.

Brad Rogers, from Groundswell Urban Planners representing Signature Communities, explained the developer has held design charrettes with local residents to obtain input. He added the developer has agreed to pay one per cent for parkland contribution.

'Signature is getting ready to market these units,' said Rogers, adding the applicant appreciates the Township bringing the report forward at this time.

He requested council consider a few minor changes to the bylaw including reducing front and side yard setbacks. He also asked that a clause which would require the applicant to have a minimum of three houses with tandem garages in the subdivision be removed. Mayor Steve Pellegrini asked Rogers if Signature had considered the \$10,000 per house contribution the Township requested. The funds, Pellegrini explained, would be put into a reserve fund for future repairs to the fence.

Rogers explained the matter has been discussed at length because Signature had never been asked to pay for something that would essentially be owned by the municipality.

'This would be a first,' Rogers explained. 'But yes they are willing to.'

'It would be a first for us too,' responded Pellegrini, joking about calling it the 'Signature Reserve Fund.'

'Keele is a major road and we don't want a shabby fence back there. This way in 20 or 25 years there will be money there to maintain that fence. You can set an example for other developers.'

Based on suggestions by councillors and residents, Pellegrini recommended a list of amendments to the staff report including accepting the \$10,000 cash contribution and the one per cent parkland contribution and that the open space block be accepted as part of the parkland contribution. He also responded to the applicant's request to remove a clause which would require the applicant to have a certain number of homes with tandems in the garage and to reduce the setback from 1.8 metres to 1.5 metres. He added the developer should have regard for existing trees in the area and meet with staff with respect to architectural controls. He also included an amendment to exclude sidewalks from the new street.

Councillor Peter Grandilli said he wouldn't support the amendments.

'We are going to set a precedent for this,' said Grandilli about removing the sidewalks and accepting a one per cent parkland contribution. 'I'm not happy with that. I will be voting against it. I'm warning you that this will come back one day to bite council in the future.'

Pellegrini explained that they didn't reduce the parkland contribution, they accepted the community block at the corner of Keele Street and McClure Drive in addition to the one per cent.

'The community has said that this corner is significant; it's a gateway to the community and they want to preserve it,' Pellegrini explained.

Schaefer said she was disappointed with those issues as well but chose to look at the big picture.

'But when I look at the total ? I can live with it,' said Schaefer. 'I don't think it denigrates what is being achieved here.'

The applications and the amendments were approved.