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Multi-storey residential proposal for King City

By Mark Pavilons

An innovative and much-needed multi-unit residential development is drawing praise from King councillors.

Council, at its Oct. 17 meeting, received plans for the development on Keele Street in King City during a public information meeting. The project involves some 60 stacked townhouses/condominium units in three buildings along Keele, in what was once the old potato chip factory. As well, one of the units will have some commercial space available.

In his report, planning director Stephen Kitchen noted this is the first application King has ever received for ?stacked? townhouses in a three-storey structure. The roughly two-acre property has 126 metres of frontage on Keele. Such a development is permitted in the core area of King City, and falls within the intensification targets mandated by the Province. Since this was a first in King City, staff drew upon experience from a similar development in Nobleton.

A representative from Humphries Planning Group, representing KeeleOne Developments Ltd., said this is one of the largest lots in the core area. The development will also include 97 parking spots. They have conducted parking and traffic studies for the project. Currently they have one access road into the site, but they are hoping to acquire a second access from York Region. There are decent setbacks for the buildings and the property will fit in nicely in the community.

A Patricia Drive resident said there is a problem with illegal parking in the area and she's not convinced the 97 parking spots will be sufficient. While the proposed buildings are within King's height restrictions, she said they would tower over existing residential houses.

Planning staff also had concerns about parking, but it is noted that the King City GO station is within a short walk.

An Elizabeth Grove resident shares concerns about traffic congestion around the Keele-King intersection, noting it will only increase with added development in the core. She's worried that motorists will cut through existing subdivision streets to find quicker routes around the core.

A Crossley Court resident had a different opinion, noting this will be a beautiful addition to the core, providing sustainable housing options.

Resident Bruce Craig said this type of development is a ?step forward? and overall concept is good. King needs a variety of housing types to accommodate local need.

Mayor Steve Pellegrini said the Province is pushing for intensification in village cores, noting ?this is an opportunity we need to embrace,? before the Province forces even greater density.

Councillor Debbie Schaefer said she's anxiously awaiting this development. She sees a lot of positives with the application. The housing will benefit young buyers as well as seniors and it's important to provide these options. ?I'm thrilled to see this blends in with the core,? she said, adding she believes it sets a ?wonderful standard for the future. It's a wonderful evolution for Keele Street.?

Councillor Cleve Mortelliti admitted this represents a big change, but he said we have to be prepared to compromise. With the

Province mandating intensification, ?it has to go somewhere.?

The property requires a zoning amendment to change the designation to mixed core use. Under the King City Community Plan, the core area designation allows for commercial uses, and stipulates that uses be for community enhancement. The policies, according to planning staff, ?encourage carefully designed and coordinated development to create an environment which is attractive and economically vibrant. New development in the core area is to ? reflect the character of the existing community.?

Staff are encouraging streetscaping be done on the site to make it aesthetically pleasing. Staff will take comments from the public and councillors and return with their recommendations at a later date.