

Rural zoning bylaw nears completion

By Mark PavilonsEditor

King's countryside zoning bylaw, when adopted later this month, will be a strong document. Staff updated councillors on the process recently, noting it's slated for approval June 27. The current blaw (74-53) regulates land use in the rural areas of King, which make up the majority of the municipality. This is the first comprehensive review of the 46-year-old bylaw. A comprehensive consultation process, which began in the spring of 2020, speaks to the level of interest in the community. In all, there were six open houses, two workshops, three agency meetings, council updates and a video. Through SpeaKing, thousands of residents visited and uploaded information. Staff pointed out the new bylaw presents a new vision for King's hamlets by creating hamlet residential zones that reflect each village's character. New employment, commercial and institutional zones will be in place. The bylaw also broadens permission within the agricultural zone and introduces new on-farm diversified uses. The plan also increases flexibility for commercial patios and it includes bicycle parking requirements. The bylaw implements the Greenbelt Natural Heritage System zone and carries forward updates to the Oak ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. It also identifies regulated areas by conservation authorities. Some 500 exception zones were reviewed and updated in this process. The bylaw also aligns with urban zoning bylaws and contains new definitions to align with regional and provincial policies. The general provisions of the bylaw were completely reviewed and all input from staff, landowners and members of the public were taken into consideration. The Pottageville hamlet boundary has been adjusted, following an Official Plan decision at the Ontario Land Tribunal. Mayor Steve Pellegrini said this bylaw encompasses the bulk of the township it's vitally important. He thanked staff and the public for its great engagement in the process. He's pleased that rules on outdoor storage have been tightened. Councillor Avia Eek noted roughly 100 acres of land have been lost in the Holland Marsh to estates and cannabis growing facilities. She cautioned staff to let potential developers know that much of the Marsh is in a floodplain. The stronger bylaw is ?music? to Councillor David Boyd's ears and he, too, praised a strong community engagement.