

Township wants to ensure features are maintained

By Mark Pavilons

King Township wants developers to pitch in for the long-term costs of maintaining physical features of subdivisions, after the projects have been assumed by the municipality.

Council approved recommendations by staff, calling on developers to make provisions for keeping King beautiful in the long-term. Many features of developments ? decorative landscape features and structural elements ? are created at the outset, but often fall into disrepair. To remedy this, King wants developers to make financial contributions for future maintenance, as a condition of assumption.

That will require an update to King's subdivision agreement terms and the establishment of a maintenance program for existing features.

Staff indicated money can be put aside starting in the 2016 budget year.

Examples of these features include entranceways, noise barriers and fences, roundabout islands, retaining walls and other decorative elements.

In his report, Mike Cole, manager of engineering, noted as growth continues, the inventory of such things is increasing rapidly. The Township doesn't have any maintenance programs for these things. Cole said some of these are already in disrepair and in some cases, the developer has been asked to return to make repairs. The Township has also made repairs at the request of homeowners. The issue of ownership and responsibility of the decorative landscape features is becoming a concern.

Cole said the Township could simply remove them from publicly owned lands, but residents feel they enhance the aesthetics of their community. He added it's also not feasible to ?entice??developers to maintain these features many years after the projects are completed.

He recommended these features be recognized as ?infrastructure? and be maintained by the Township, but only if funds and rights for access are provided by the developers who installed them.

The Township doesn't have any money earmarked for this added responsibility, so the plan is to create a maintenance reserve for proper upkeep of these things. The concept of asking developers for money isn't unusual, Cole said, pointing to nearby Aurora, which includes this as a condition of draft plan approval.

An inventory has been completed by staff for review.