

Council consider draft plan for proposed Fieldgate subdivision

Written By PETER RICHARDSON

Mark Bradley, representing Fieldgate Homes and their development in Shelburne's east end, Shelburne 89 Developments, was at Council Monday night, to present the draft plan for the organization's new development.

Of primary interest to council, were his insights into the commercial aspects of the development. There will be two large commercial blocks and 321 residential properties in the new development, which is currently being prepared, with building to commence in 2020/2021.

Following the required EA study, several improvements were required to the plan, primarily by the MTO.

A new controlled intersection will be added east of Hwy 89 and County Road 124, designated on the plan, as Street ?B?. It will run north /south, between the two designated commercial blocks and will allow access and egress onto Hwy.89, thus relieving potential strain on the existing intersection of Hwy 89 and CR 124. This will coincide with a reduction in the speed limit, from 70 kph to 50 kph and the addition of new street lighting, up to the western side of the new street. To facilitate pedestrian traffic, especially school children, there will also be new sidewalks installed along 124 to School Road.

Coun. Walter Benotto questioned the amount of commercial space, wanting to see more facing County Road 124, however, the Fieldgate studies showed that tenants wanted frontage on Hwy 89, hence the placement of the commercial space facing Hwy 89. Mr. Bradley noted that this is currently a draft plan and that changes may certainly happen as the process continues.

Coun. Benotto also noted that there was a high demand in town for senior housing, for those who want to downsize and vacate their larger homes in their retirement years.

Deputy Mayor Steve Anderson asked if they had investigated putting commercial in place of a block of medium density homes, north of the existing Tim Hortons, noting that the town needed more retail spaces. CAO Denyse Morrissey suggested that perhaps a compromise, where the bottom of the medium density could be retail, while the upper stories were residential, might be an option. The representatives from Fieldgate stated that all of these concerns could be taken back to the designers for consideration.

Mayor Wade Mills noted that there was a lot of residential space in town and very little commercial space and wondered if Shelburne was approaching a critical mass situation. This had not been revealed as yet in planning developments.

Coun. Kyle Fegan asked if there was any intention to changing the current Tim Hortons driveway, which creates notable problems with traffic flow at the moment. Fieldgate replied that no such discussions were underway presently, as the MTO was not supportive of joining the two commercial properties. Mayor Mills asked if an access route between the Beer Store and the Fieldgate properties could be achieved and thus allow a second egress via the controlled intersection of Street ?B? and Hwy 89, to relieve some of the congestion. Again, this could pose problems however, with excess traffic going through the new development and congesting it's roads unnecessarily.

In the end, all of these and other issues will need to be ironed out at later stages in the development process, as we draw closer to final approvals and permissions. For now, the proposed plan will bring much needed commercial/retail spaces to the town in addition to many new homes and families.

Lemcke properties

Next up, was yet another presentation by the Lemckes, regarding providing sewer and water services to their homes at 501 and 503 Owen Sound Street.

This has been an ongoing discussion, at Council, for over two years, with much back and forth and no resolution.

In a nutshell, the two residences have been paying for water and sewer services, but are actually not connected, directly, to the town services. Instead, their sewage and water services run through a private sewer connection that runs through the property at 408 Robert Street. Since it is a private sewer, Town staff have advised the property owners that the Town is not responsible for maintaining that sewer.

The current property owners, have been requesting that the Town assume, at least, a partial responsibility for services since, in their research, it has come forward that all the private sewer issues, were done by the Town, when the sewer system was initially installed.

They have brought drawings that show that the sewers were originally to be installed on Owen Sound Street, however, as only their two houses existed at that time, this private sewer compromise appears to have been adopted instead. Once approved, by the then Foreman/Superintendent of Public Works, Claud Duffin, the Town began billing the residences for services. What Bruce and Greg Lemcke are proposing, is a cost sharing agreement with the Town, to hook their properties up to the Town sewers directly.

In recent discussions with the owner of 408 Robert Street, he has agreed to run new lines through his property and to allow the Town to purchase an easement, so that they will be responsible for maintenance of those lines, at a cost of \$88,000. This arrangement will solve the issue for the Lemckes and provide new sewer and water lines to be installed in place of the aged and unknown condition lines now servicing the homes. It is this plan that the Lemckes would like to see the Town share the cost of.

The one drawback, is the current regulations require more separation between the water and sewer lines than is possible in the property at 408 Robert Street. Both the Town planner and the Town engineer stated that it may be possible to receive permission to proceed, regardless, but that, that would require further research on their parts.

The engineer, Steve Burnett, stated that water could be supplied from the water main on Owen Sound Street as an alternate solution. Mayor Mills then addressed the cost sharing issue, by noting that in previous negotiations, the homeowners would have had to pay for both a connection fee and the cost of running the lines from the Town mains connection, into their residences, amounting to approximately \$25,000 per home, or \$50,000 combined. His suggestion was that since the 408 Robert Street solution was by far the most economical, coming in at under \$100,000, that the issue was primarily solved and the Lemckes should proceed.

At this point, Bruce Lemke opined that since the original homeowners would have paid a connection fee for the dwellings, he and Greg should not have to pay it again and that this still was not a cost sharing arrangement as requested.

Mayor Mills stated that before further discussions were warranted, the Lemckes needed to file an application for the easement and establish a binding agreement with the owner of 408 Robert Street to facilitate the discussed agreement to utilize his property.

The easement application would then have to be presented to the committee of adjustment, for approval and at that time, further negotiations could be implemented. He was advised that as any required permits would be issued by the County, no involvement with the MOE would be required and any agreement reached could proceed immediately.

Parking lot rejected

In another issue on Robert Street, In a split decision, resulting in a tie vote that could not be resolved, due to the absence of one councillor, Council defeated a motion to allow Southbridge Health Care Inc., to proceed with the building of their requested parking lot at 104 Robert Street.

The proposed use of the vacant eyesore, was rejected because the opposing councillors wanted the site to be used for housing, not a parking lot and small park. The rationale provided by Southbridge, seemed solid and a needed use, however, it did not sway the

opposing councillors, led by Coun. Lynda Buffett. In a recorded vote, Mayor Mills, Deputy Mayor Anderson and Coun. Benotto voted in favour, while Councillors Buffett, Fegan and Shane Hall voted against. As Coun. Lindsay Wegener had excused herself due to a pecuniary interest conflict, the motion was deemed defeated.

New Town software

Town Clerk Jennifer Willoughby presented a report to Council regarding the purchase and use of a new software package, with which to manage the production of agendas and meetings.

Although not inexpensive, the software would drastically reduce the man hours required to produce the Council agendas and the running of meetings in Shelburne.

Currently, the Clerk requires three days of work to prepare the Council Meeting Agenda, a definite waste of her abilities and of money. The new software, will facilitate this function as well as the live streaming of Council meetings to the website and many other functions, such as meeting scheduling, report management, electronic voting and document and electronic records management. The amount of time saved with this software will more than offset the costs involved and free up valuable man-hours for staff personnel.

New procurement policy

In other business, the Treasurer, Carey Holmes, presented Council with the new Municipal Procurement Policy, which will replace to existing and outdated policy and streamline the procurement process and the day to day running of the Town.

A lengthy and involved document, the new policy will primarily transfer the responsibility for purchasing day-to-day items already budgeted for by Council, from Council to Staff, thus allowing for the regular flow of day-to-day purchasing without the delays of waiting for a Council meeting to request payments being made.

The new policy contains numerous checks and balances and provides more transparency in the financial dealings of the Town.

Spending limits of Staff have been reassessed and raised and the need for a petty cash fund is now eliminated. The new policy will basically allow the Town to run more like a business and less like a bureaucracy and establish a better line of communication and co-operation between Council and Staff.

New practices to kick off future Council meetings

A motion was passed to acknowledge the original land ownership of the local First Nations Tribes in the area, at the start of every Council meeting. Also, a Notice of Motion was filed to open each Council Meeting with the playing of the National Anthem.