

Main Street condo proposal raises concerns

By Peter Richardson

Council opened Monday night with a report from the Town Planner Steve Wever regarding a controversial new development being proposed for the property at 600 Main Street East.

The property, which has frontage on both Main Street and Centennial Road, is current a vacant lot.

The proposed development is for a high density residential condominium complex consisting of 60 two storey town homes. All the roads and services for the complex will be paid for and maintained by the individual owners and /or the condominium board.

Many issues were brought up at Council concerning the development, ranging from the housing density, access for emergency vehicles and the access to existing Town infrastructure by the Town in the case of maintenance or service issues.

There were also a number of zoning issues relating to lot sizes and setback requirements as well as floodplain and easement issues.

One local resident who was in attendance, Ray Blanchard, stated that he, for one, was 100 per cent against the proposed development.

One of, but not the only, major concern revolved around traffic congestion and the difficulties perceived with getting in to and out of the development.

Mayor Bennington, was one of those who expressed concerns in this regard, stating that it is almost impossible to make a left hand turn from Main Street at the lights at 124, let alone from the proposed exits from the development, where no lights are proposed.

Another resident, Alex Cole, said that, in his opinion, at least a dedicated merge lane from Main Street would be required to allow entry to the development safely, as Main Street, at that location is a four lane thoroughfare.

CAO John Telfer foresaw serious issues with liability, should the Town have to dig up any water or sewer mains beneath the various easements proposed by the developers.

One example being if an easement over a town sewer line had been paved by the developer or the Condominium Corporation, who would be liable for the restoration of that easement to that state? This sort of potential liability would not be acceptable to the Town.

Darren Vela, of Innovative Planning Solutions, speaking on behalf of the developer, answered that it was his belief that the Town's responsibility would end with the restoration of the gravel road bed and further improvements would be the Condo Corporations responsibility.

As this was a draft proposal, as required by the building approval process and as there were still many reports and answers to come, Council accepted the draft as a first step towards a final plan, duly vetted, which would then be voted on at a later meeting of Council.

Still looking at development, Council also heard a report, from Mr. Wever concerning the proposed Hyland Village Development at 401 Main Street West next to the Bluewood manufacturing facility.

In response to earlier concerns from Council regarding the development having only a single entry/exit point, the developer had come back with several options which would provide a second point of entry and exit from the property.

Council was pleased with the response and the proposed solutions and expressed their gratitude to the developer for their efforts.

Next up came a presentation from Stephen Burnett, of SBA, the Town's engineering consultants, concerning the matter of arsenic levels in three of the Town's wells.

The Province recently changed its guidelines, for the levels of permitted arsenic in drinking water, which adversely impact some of the Town's wells.

Arsenic, though toxic, is a naturally occurring element that is in the bed rock that everyone draws water from, so it has been a known quantity for the town, always.

The major problem is with Wells #3, #5 and #6 and had been being addressed by mixing the water with that from wells 7 and 8.

However, with the new regulations, this was no longer a suitable solution.

Mr. Burnett outlined two alternatives for Council, but the best solution appeared to be to conduct an Environmental Assessment of Wells 7 and 8, to allow them to be pumped simultaneously and at a greater capacity than is currently being pumped and to dig a ninth well to be used as a back-up, or reserve well.

This would allow for the eventual decommissioning of Well #3 and with existing procedures, assure that Shelburne's water was safe and met all existing regulations.

The costs to the Town, of this option would amount to approximately \$400,000 compared to the other solution, which was much more expensive, at some \$650,000.

In other business, Council opted to take under consideration, a proposal from Councillor Dan Sample, that the Town amend its ATV By-law to allow the use of ATVs on Town roads for the sole purpose of accessing the existing ATV trail running from Orangeville to Owen Sound.

Mayor Bennington, who supports the idea, posted the question on his mayoralty Facebook page and reported that he received over 14,000 replies!

The Mayor stated that the highest number of replies to a question had been a mere 2,800, so there is certainly a lot of interest in the idea.

One disapproving voice, however, is that of Police Chief Kent Moore, who addressed a letter to Council expressing his deep concerns and total disapproval of such a change.

The Chief noted numerous statistical and study references showing that ATVs are not designed for use on paved surfaces and that most ATV related deaths occur on paved roads.

The Chief also indicated that enforcement of the By-law change would be almost impossible.