

Many oppose proposed development on Owen Sound St.

Written By **PETER RICHARDSON**

Council opened Monday night with both Mayor Wade Mills and Coun. Kyle Fegan, missing in action, due to the snow storm.

Deputy Mayor Steve Anderson chaired the meeting and the night started with a Public Meeting regarding the proposed development at 124 Owen Sound Street.

Owen Green Developments asked for both a zoning change and to present a site plan application to the Town. Shelburne's chief planner Steve Wever, explained the proposals and pointed out that the bylaw amendments being proposed were to allow residential units to be included in the potential development and to modify numerous size requirements for parking spaces, yard sizes, building heights and lot coverage.

The building will be enlarged to three stories under the proposal with a mixture of commercial and residential units and an enclosed parking garage.

Although there were no official objections to the plan, there were a number of public ones. The McCraes, who live beside the historical Jelly House on First Street, are currently directly behind another of this developer's building sites and stated that they had numerous concerns.

They stated that, with both sites utilizing the laneway to the west of Owen Sound Street, parking was going to be and is already an issue. They also noted that the amount of profanity from the workers made it difficult to even use their backyard and that there has never been any direct contact between the residents and the developer as to the construction and what to expect.

There was also an objection to the huge all-white building adversely affecting their property values and not at all fitting with the historical heritage of the town.

The look and the parking issues were reiterated by several other individuals concerning the Owen Sound property. Several councillors voiced concerns over parking, noting that there were to be more residences than parking spaces in the proposal. Mr. Wever mentioned, that under the current code, this type of a renovation was only required to maintain the existing parking for the lot, but that in this case it was to be enlarged, from 7 to 31 spaces.

Another concern voiced, was that the proposal called for allowing live/work spaces to be included and Len Guchardi felt strongly that this was not a wise move, pointing out that existing bylaws were created to prohibit this practice in the downtown area.

Although the building is to be completed in different phases, there were concerns voiced in this regard as well, since the previously mentioned development, though supposed to be completed in two years, was in fact still a long way from completion. It was expressed that the two to three year completion schedule for this one, was at best optimistic. This argument draws some support from the fact that previous projects handled by this developer have run into problems with both the Town and the County, to the point of stop work orders being issued.

By far however the most often voiced concerns centred around the appearance of the development and the potential parking issues. Council decided to accept the report of the Town Planner, but to withhold approval pending further discussions and study.

Polar Plunge update

Following the public meeting, Council heard two Delegations and saw the arrival of the missing mayor and Coun. Fegan, who had just spent the previous 5 hours travelling from Toronto to Shelburne.

The first delegation saw Officer Jeff McLean from the Shelburne Police, bring Council up to date on the upcoming Polar Plunge, in support of the Special Olympics and to solicit Council members participation. Currently Coun. Fegen and Coun. Lindsay Wegener have signed up to plunge and Deputy Mayor Anderson pledged financial support on Monday, but refused to commit to getting wet, yet.

Mayor Mills appears to be on the edge, but Coun. Fegen had a proposal to perhaps push him over. He is challenging the Town to help him raise \$2,000 at which point he will dress as the Hulk and plunge. However, if the Town helps raise \$2,500, he wants the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor to be required to plunge. This met with considerable good humoured support, with Coun. Fegen admitting that he chose the Hulk, over a Speedo, due to preliminary testing strongly not favouring the latter. This year's goal is to raise \$15,000 and Jeff stated that they are well on their way there already.

The Door

The second delegation was from Hylands Youth for Christ and The Door Youth Centre. Presented by Debbie Harrison it was an informative tour of the groups history and achievements, leading up to their new permanent home on Main Street.

First launching in 2005 in a mobile trailer, by 2013 The Door was taking up space in the Manse at St. Paul's Anglican Church. After that was sold, they sought refuge in the church basement as well as its trailer.

In 2017, they moved to their permanent residence at the rear of 167 Main Street West. The group offers numerous opportunities for youth from all backgrounds and currently host drop-in centres in Orangeville and Alliston as well as Shelburne. Though obviously religiously oriented, they accept all youth and are primarily volunteer staffed. In fact, those who are paid, must fundraise their own income.

The Door is open every Friday and all are welcome to attend from 5 until 10 PM.

Consultant to study Town's policing options

CAO Denyse Morrissey presented her report regarding the obtaining of an independent consultant to evaluate and report back to Council, on the OPP Costing and the current Police Service.

She stressed that this consultancy was not to simply look at costs, but was to investigate every aspect involved in policing the Town, including services, accommodations, staffing levels, cost increases to be expected after transitioning and an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages, if any.

The process would be on a tight timetable, using up virtually all of the six month period given by the OPP for a decision. In addition, there would be two further meetings with the OPP to answer questions from the Council and the public as well as an online survey, also allowing for questions or concerns.

A limit of \$50,000 was set for this consultancy and would be paid out of a Town reserve set up last year for policing issues. This money was wholly from the Town operating surplus and has no connection to the Police Services Board.

2019 Draft Budget

The final big ticket item for the evening, was the presentation of the Draft Budget, by Treasurer Carey Holmes.

This year's numbers do not look great for Shelburne resident's tax bills. Unlike last year, we do not have a large growth increase to help fund the budget but the expenses keep mounting up, with over \$20 million in new capital expenditures on the horizon.

The Provincial assessment of Shelburne's financial health shows that the debt load is too high and the Town reserves are too low, which is not the best of scenarios for the new Council.

The budget schedule is as follows, January 28th, Council Presentation, February 4th, Special Budget meeting, February 11th, the public presentation and February 25th, the adoption of the 2019 Budget.

This year's funding gap, that amount which must be raised from taxes, is just over \$7.1 million. This results from expenses being a shade under \$8.8 million, with revenues coming in at just under \$1.7 million. The difference, comes from taxes.

Although currently, the tax rate has not changed, the Tax Levy increase amounts to 7.7 percent which translates into a 4.96 percent taxation portion increase. Based on an average assessment of \$313,774 in Shelburne, this will translate into a tax increase of 3.25 percent or \$72.18 annually, on average.

Shelburne saw 4 percent growth in 2018 compared to 0.69 percent for 2019. New growth will not be seen until very late in 2019. All of these figures are for the Town portion only and do not reflect changes to the County or School Board levies.

The General Capital Projects for 2019 total \$688,336 and include things ranging from a new computer server for Town Hall Staff to Long Term Debt repayments of \$164,892. These are 16 percent tax funded, with the rest coming from Grants, Water and Sewer, Reserves and Gas Tax.

The Water and Sewer Capital Projects total \$2,497,371 for this year driven by the \$1,770,000 to rehab Well #3 to reduce the naturally occurring arsenic levels.

Shelburne's current debt level equals \$1,680.52 per household. The tax allocation, or how your money is spent, per household is \$2,292.96 and breaks down in the following manner. Police Protection \$825, Council and Committees, \$46, Public Works, \$596, General Government and Town Hall, \$230, Recreation and Culture \$206, Planning and Development \$229, Fire Protection \$115 and Other protective services \$46.

With several upper tier grants and funding uncertain at this time and with the uncertainties of the new provincial government's plans, Shelburne residents should brace themselves for a tax increase in 2019. However, the extent of that is still undetermined and Council will hold a Special Budget Meeting to try and work out the best approach to easing the amount of an increase.

Committee appointments

Finally, in other business, Council made all of it's committee appointments , from the public, Monday night. Of particular note, was the replacement of long time member of the Police Services Board, Chairman Len Mikulich with a new face, that of Mike Frazackerly.