

Shelburne to get new plaza, soccer pitch

Shelburne Council on Monday approved zoning for Shelburne Market Village, a retail plaza and future light industrial site on Highway 10/89 east of County Road 124.

And, in other business, the council approved funding for the regulation soccer pitch and lighting at Greenwood Park.

At a break in Monday's meeting, Mayor Ed Crewson said it was one of the most exciting nights he had spent in his 25 years on the council. "We are getting a new plaza and a new soccer pitch," he said.

The plaza proposal is scaled back considerably from the original concept of a couple of years ago but it will have a grocery supermarket and either a Canadian Tire or something similar as anchors. Developers Blackwood Properties Inc. has not disclosed specifics of its probable tenants.

The original proposal would have been for 27,915 square metres (300,000 square feet) but the approved plan is for an initial 11,212 square metres or about 121,000 square feet. This would leave much of the property's 15 hectares available for future development.

In the now-approved first phase, there would be a food store of between 35,400 and 43,000 square feet, a major retailer of 27,000 square feet, along with a bank and restaurant plus about 47,000 square feet of other commercial space.

Although the zoning has been approved, construction cannot begin until the requirements of the Shelburne East Area Traffic study have been met. In particular, the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) has demands for highway access.

The market village does not include Wrigglesworth Corner, which is separately owned by VanDyk Properties and already has commercial zoning and a number of tenants including the Esso station and The Beer Store.

But VanDyk must also meet the seat requirements before it can convert the former Chinese restaurant to a drive-through "thought to be a Tim Hortons outlet.

In both the market village and the proposed drive through, the new developments are touted as recapturing much of the current "outflow" of Shelburne-area business.

Longtime patrons of Pete's Donuts across County 124 from the proposed drive-through are leery of the need for a Timmy's or something similar, but Shelburne's rapid population growth might require it. (Shelburne's population is said to be 6,500 now with more residential development under way, and the new population of mostly commuters would be accustomed, if not addicted to, Tim's coffee. Orangeville, with a population of about 30,000, now has five Tim Horton's outlets.)

Still, town council did not take the approval lightly, but questioned at some length the effects the market village would have on the downtown.

Councillor Geoff Dunlop wondered in particular whether the developers had discussed the development with the Business Improvement Area, and whether they would be willing to work with the BIA.

The Blackwood's planner responded that there had been a household survey but the developer "had never worked directly with the BIA." However, it would have no objection to working with the BIA in future.

On the market survey, the planner told Councillor Walter Benotto it had been conducted in the Shelburne trading area with the town as the "prime" area and others as secondary.

Deputy Mayor Ken Bennington was concerned about the number of empty storefronts along Shelburne's Main Street but the planner

said not only that "the vacancy levels are not high" but also that the type of retailers looking at the market village "are not the ones looking for downtown (locations)."

The store sizes in market village are being capped at the specified square footage, which is somewhat smaller than the cap on the Loblaws development to the south, including No Frills, but much larger than the Foodland in the downtown plaza.

Mr. Wever said the caps are based on population requirements and to avoid "overbuilding. This much can be justified," he said.

In other business, the contract for the soccer field has been awarded to Northgate Farms Ltd. at the low bid of just under \$260,000.

North Gate was reported as having an excellent related reputation, having "completed several previous soccer projects including the BMO Field Turf Conversion in Toronto and a long list of high quality soccer fields as well as a couple of large golf course projects," Mr. Wever reported.

The cost of the field is covered mostly by Development Charges.

By Wes Keller