

New housing in Shelburne

The proposal for a 40-unit condominium development on a strip of land between Shelburne's Gordon Street and the county-owned CP Rail corridor has been modified somewhat since it first was presented to town council two years ago, but it will need a few more changes before winning approval from a lukewarm council.

Gordon Street runs north from Main Street generally to the vicinity of CDDHS and Hyland Heights elementary school. It is likely the narrowest paved roadway in Shelburne, and lies at the west end of First and Second avenues.

The two perceived problems arising from the proposal have been that the two or three-storey height of the proposed condo units would intrude on the privacy of residents of the two avenues, and that the 42 (now reduced to 40) residential units would create traffic problems on Gordon Street.

Initially, proponent Stoneridge Holdings had proposed a 2-way condo road parallel to Gordon, with access via First or Second avenue. Town council objected on the basis, in part, that emergency vehicles entering at the centre of the development wouldn't know which way to turn.

Now, in a revised proposal presented to the council Monday, the condo road would be one way with access from the south end of Gordon as well as from First and Second. Exit would be via First or Second.

On Monday, the occupant of a home at the northwest end of Second Avenue asked that the most northerly condo unit be removed as it would overlook not only her living room but also her pool.

Gaston Bottero, a principal of Stoneridge, agreed that the unit could be moved further away from Gordon, to provide a greater separation from the lady's property, and also that there might be some adjustments possible with windows.

The present proposal calls for three 4-plex units at the south end of Gordon. This will need to change as the council is averse to such units adjacent to Main Street.

Deputy Mayor Ken Bennington said he doesn't favour 4-plexes, and these would be right at the corner on the town's most highly travelled through route. He said he would prefer to see townhouses there.

Mr. Bottero said the 4-plexes would simply look like 'semis split in half,' but then agreed that he would be open to either townhouses or semis. It is expected that a revised draft would offer the choice.

Councillor Tom Egan raised the issue of a remote possibility that a rail line could eventually be restored. Mr. Bottero said there would be warnings in the sales agreements.

The more likely impediment, also broached at the meeting, was the likelihood of a 230 kv power line in close proximity. The power line easement is currently being either negotiated or expropriated by Dufferin Wind Power, which had previously had 'leave to construct' from the Ontario Energy Board. The DWP wind farm approvals are under appeal at the Environmental Review Tribunal.

The possibility of a power line would also be included in any sales agreements.

In a phone interview, Planner Steve Wever wasn't concerned about the possibility of a rail line being restored. He said the town opposes both restoration of the rail and construction of a power line.

Admitting that the development would lack the setbacks required by federal rules on rail lines, he said it would be the responsibility of the rail proponent to satisfy the federal regulations.

Mr. Wever's position as a planner is simply that use of the corridor for rail is not ?good planning.?

Although the corridor is owned by the county, Mr. Wever said it is shown as part of the trail system in Shelburne's Official Plan.

By Wes Keller