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Council tries to tackle parking problems at Cook Crescent

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The saga of parking problems continues in Shelburne.

During their meeting on Monday (May 9), Shelburne Town Council received a report from staff detailing possible parking options for Cook Crescent. The report was drafted after concerns were raised by residents of the Summerhill subdivision regarding winter parking and infractions.

?The whole idea was to go through the exercise to see if there was something feasible and reasonable that would help solve the problem,? said Mayor Wade Mills.

In the report to council, staff noted the homes in the development have two official parking spots ? one in the driveway and another in the garage.

?First of all, people don't park in a garage because they load it with stuff and secondly, having two vehicles, they have no place to park a second vehicle,? said Coun. Walter Benotto. ?I don't know how we can change that.?

The first option presented to council was to create an additional parking area on the north side of Cook Crescent. To create the parking area a number of utilities, streetlamps, and trees would need to be relocated. Town staff said they estimate the cost for changes such as asphalt, curbs, and store water to be in excess of $525,000 without engineering costs.

The new parking area would create around 20 new parking spots for the subdivision.

?To recover some of the cost associated with this possible option one, is municipalities may impose special charges, known as local improvement charges. Parking areas specific accommodations should be funded by residents experiencing direct benefit, through local improvement charge,? said Jennifer Willoughby, director of legislative services for Shelburne.

The second option proposed is to provide a town-wide exemption for boulevard parking, as a trial and pilot project basis, during the winter parking season from Nov. 15 to April 15.

Boulevard parking is not permitted at any time throughout the year. Staff said the option would create new winter maintenance issues and possible damage to vehicles with the restricted snow clearing opportunities.

?This option also creates a safety hazard and sight line issues trying to negotiate a driveway where a vehicle may be parked blocking access and sightlines to and from a driveway,? said Willoughby.

The third option would be to approach the owner of a vacant parcel of land located at 300 Col. Phillips Drive, owned by the Roman Catholic Episcopal, to inquire about parking accommodations.

If the landowner agrees, the Town would be required to lease the property for a fee to establish a new municipal parking lot. According to the report the estimated capital cost for 20 permit parking spots ranges between $27,000 and $74,000 with additional costs for snow removal and a possible $3,835 fee to rezone the land.

Staff did not recommend any of the options outlined in the report to council, and also noted that over-night municipal parking is provided in two areas and town for the winter months. While inconvenient, staff also added that other residents in town utilize the

parking in cases where parking is not sufficient.

?Unfortunately, the answer seems to be, at least from a reasonable and feasible point of view, there just isn't an easy fix to this,? said Mills. ?At least in good conscience, I feel comfortable enough going back to the resident to say this isn't something we swept under the rug, we looked long and hard at what options were available. There isn't a good solution there.?

Coun. Lynda Buffet raised the question on whether parallel parking on the driveway portion located between the sidewalk and roadway could be tested, as suggested by the concerned resident.

?That still leaves us pressured for snow storage area,? said Jim Moss, director of development and operations for Shelburne. ?The wing of the plow, when it fills up with snow, if you are pushing that up against a vehicle it can damage the body work or cave in the side of the vehicle.?

Parking in the Shelburne streets is restricted during the winter month with no overnight parking permitted from Nov. 15 to April 15 between 12 a.m. and 8 a.m.

The ticket cost for noncompliance of the overnight street parking is $10 and will be increased to $40 when the new traffic bylaw has been enacted.