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Proposed subdivision well received by community

By Angela Gismondi

It's not every day that a developer and residents work together to create a plan of subdivision that all parties can agree upon.
A public meeting was held in King Monday regarding the SigNature development proposed for Keele Street and McClure Drive in King City. The meeting was attended by many local residents who voiced their support for the revised subdivision proposal.
Stephen Kitchen, director of planning for the Township of King explained the owner, SigNature, is proposing to build a new subdivision consisting of 18 single detached residential units fronting onto a proposed cul-du-sac right-of-way, accessed via McClure Drive. The subject lands, about five acres in total, are located at the southwest corner of Keele Street and McClure Drive at 13400 and 13424 Keele Street. The intersection of the new street and McClure Drive is proposed to align with Aukland Lane to the north.
Although local residents are now in support of the proposed development, Kitchen pointed out there was a time when the developer and the residents did not see eye to eye. The applicant's initial proposal consisted of 45 townhouse units and four single detached dwellings, he explained.
A public meeting was held in December 2011 and many residents were opposed to the proposed subdivision, particularly the high density, which they said was not in keeping with the character of the existing community. The property is located in a low density residential area of King City and is surrounded in all directions by single detached residential units.
After that meeting, the owner and surrounding residents began discussions directly with each other and addressed the residents' concerns. The owner has decided to revise the plans and applications from 49 units to 18 units, resulting in a reduction of 31 residential units.
The proposed new lots will have 50-, 60- and 70-foot frontages onto the new cul-de-sac and nine of the 18 units will have rear yards backing onto Keele Street. One outstanding issue staff has with the revised plan is the reverse lotting in the subdivision and having the houses back onto Keele Street, an arterial road and front onto an internal street.
?The design principles and policies of the Community Plan state that reverse lotting on all streets shall generally be prohibited,? Kitchen explained. ?Planning staff understands that the proposed draft plan of subdivision is the result, in part, of a considerable amount of consultation with the surrounding residents but it is planning staff's preference to avoid reverse lotting in order to promote an attractive streetscape and pedestrian-friendly environment.?
In his deputation, Brad Rogers, agent for the applicant, told council, staff and the public present at the meeting that the project has evolved significantly since 2011.
?We believe this particular site has the potential for infill development which would contribute to meeting the township's intensification targets,? said Rogers.
He also suggested that construction access be provided from Keele Street instead of McClure Drive to minimize the impact on the existing community.
Jeff Brookhouser, a King City resident who lives adjacent to the proposed subdivision, spoke on behalf of 155 households who make up the McClure Keele Area Ratepayers Group. He said the group is supportive of the revised application submitted by the owner, adding the owner has included many of the resident's requests and conditions in the new plan.
?Many people in this audience have spent time and money and worked diligently and enthusiastically for over a year to get to this point,? said Brookhouser. ?We believe the developer and the community have created a balance between intensification and maintaining the character of this community. You can't always find a balance but I believe we have found one.?
Mayor Steve Pellegrini congratulated the community members and the developer for working together.
?I wish every developer would work with the residents like they worked with you,? said Pellegrini. ?I applaud you and your group for everything you've done.?
Councillor Debbie Schaefer applauded the community for their efforts.
?There is a tremendous amount of creativity here,? she said. ?This really is a benchmark for us overall. It shows how to figure out what's really important and how to achieve it.?
Henry Beaven, chair of the steering committee, thanked council and staff for their patience and guidance with the matter.
?I would like to thank those of you who supported us in the community, not only morally but financially,? said Beaven, adding he believes the project is close to becoming a reality. ?I think this is an example of what can happen when problems are approached with common sense and good faith.?

The comments were received and the matter was referred back to staff for a further report.