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Shelburne council debates approval of rezoning application

Written By **Paula Brown**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Shelburne Town council is debating the approval of a re-zoning application, after receiving a report from the town planner during their meeting on Monday (April 12).

The application, which was presented to council by town planner Steve Wever, requests to re-zone a residence located at 105 Mill Street allowing for it to be converted into three dwelling units.

?We have had a number of these applications recently, they do help to contribute towards providing a mix of housing by increasing the rental housing opportunities,? said Wever.

While part of the application notes the widening of the driveway, residence in the area and councillors have brought up concerns of parking, specifically street parking.

Coun. Walter Benotto in discussion with the other councillors said there were several components about the location that troubled him including the amount of wheelchair and heavy vehicle traffic on the street, despite it being a dead-end, along with the potential for more vehicles on the street.

?I'm not a hundred percent sure putting more vehicles on that street is the best idea, at this point in time,? said Benotto.

Mayor Wade Mills addressing the parking concerns, questioned whether a stacking of cars per unit would be a viable option.

?The parking spaces, one per unit, needs to be six metres back from the front lot line, so in essence the bylaw requires two per unit,? said Wever. ?What they are proposing to do here is to have the three required spaces all more than six metres back from the front lot line and by doing so they still have another six metres behind all those cars, where you could in theory park another row of three cars; so a driveway with the capacity for six, plus the garage.?

Jennifer Smith, who is part of the application said with the apartment being smaller their intent is to rent to single people and with the location being in walking distance of town amenities that renters may not have vehicles.

Coun. Lindsay Wegner also noted that council had approved a previous application for a lot backing onto Mill, and questioned council's right to deny the application.

?For us to refuse an application, that really should be on sound planning principles and not necessarily on general feelings. Unfortunately there is a certain amount of planning authority that is conferred to local municipalities, but it still is very much in the confines of broader provincial planning policy, and our decisions have to remain consistent with that policy,? said Mills.

With allocation from the town currently unknown, Benotto brought forward a motion to defer the decision on the application until after the special council meeting scheduled for April 28. The first meeting in May for Town council will be May 10.