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Shelburne Council rezones residential home for supportive senior housing

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Shelburne Town Council has approved an application to rezone a residential home to provide supportive housing for seniors.

During their meeting on Monday (June 3), Shelburne Council received a planning report from Town Planner Steve Wever. The report requested approval to rezone a residential home, located at 393 Colonel Phillips Drive, to a Group Home Type 1 to allow for the operation of a supportive housing unit for seniors.

?It's of the small-scale variety. It is fairly common for municipalities to allow this type of group home with some restrictions,? Wever told Council.

The application outlines a plan for the applicant, Natacia Leslie-McKenzie, to reside in an additional unit in the basement while the senior residents will live in the main unit, which contains four bedrooms. Leslie-McKenzie will operate the supportive housing facility for seniors and provide services that include transportation, medication administration, laundry, meal preparation, housekeeping and emergency assistance.

The home will be retrofitted to accommodate the needs of the seniors including a stair lift, handrails in the bathrooms and raised toilets.

?I've seen the need since I came to Shelburne, just being out in the community we see the challenges these individuals face on a day-to day basis. I want to give back to the community by offering our home to help,? said Leslie-McKenzie. ?I know we have homes here, but we don't have the space ? there's waiting lists and there's not enough workers.?

Addressing concerns about parking, Wever noted that the residency has four available parking spots, and the senior residents of the home won't have their own vehicles.

?We don't anticipate this would really generate high parking demands. The only additional parking that we would see is if there's in-person medical appointments or if there's family visiting, but that could be the case whether it's a group home or not,? said Wever.

Following the conclusion of the report, Shelburne Town Councillors had the opportunity to ask their questions or raise concerns about the proposed supportive seniors housing application.

Coun. Walter Benotto recommended the applicants look at retrofitting a sprinkler system as part of their emergency plan due to possible mobility issues from the residents.

?It's really great when they're mobile, but when they've got canes and other things it gets really difficult.?

In addition to the discussion on safety, Coun. Len Guchardi questioned what the applicant will be doing in terms of ?wandering elderly.?

Leslie-McKenzie said the doors will have alarms, which will go off if any doors leading outside are opened.

Concerns were also raised about the rezoning of the home and whether, if it's sold in the future, the new owners would be able to operate facilities such as a drug rehab.

?I have no problems with this at all, I think it's wonderful. We are struggling in Shelburne for senior care and transitional housing,

my only concern is the actual rezoning,? said Coun. Lindsay Wegener.

Wever explained that in cases of rehab facilities and homes with parolees, the property would have to undergo another rezoning known as Group Home Type 2.

?I have full faith that these owners are not looking to create any problems for the area,? said Wever.

Shelburne Town Council unanimously voted in approval of the application.