

Shelburne facing DC challenges

Following a public meeting that was attended by only a handful of residents Monday, Shelburne council delayed adoption of its new Development Charges bylaw pending amendments by its consultants, Watson & Associates.

DCs, which came into vogue in the late 1980s, are intended to balance the burden of new capital costs between existing and new residents and/or non-residential, based on estimates of who derives benefits or for whom the capital investments are needed.

The council, along with some existing residents and at least one developer, is in disagreement with the consultant, and Mayor Ed Crewson is especially perturbed that the consultant initially provided an 8-page summary of proposals but withheld the 140-page background study on which the summary was based.

As presented, the bylaw would reduce the residential DC by more than a third (to \$13,997 from \$20,245), but would almost double the industrial/commercial/institutional (ICI), to \$4.08 a square foot from \$2.29.

In an interview Tuesday, Mayor Crewson said the change would not be to the total of DCs collected, but to the apportionment. He said existing DC apportionment is based on 18% ICI and 82% residential. The new one would be based on 32% ICI and 68% residential.

He said the apportionment is based on the town's growth area, in which 32% would be commercial or industrial. But it comes at a time when Orangeville has waived DCs for ICI development, and when Shelburne's greater need is for employment growth.

As well, neighbouring Grey County imposes no non-residential DCs. There, the somewhat isolated town of Hanover is literally bustling with what appears to be industrial development. Deputy Chief Building Official Brenda Goetz said in a phone interview that the town collects the county's DC but has opted not to impose any charges of its own.

Shelburne could also waive DCs for employment development, but doing so would place an unfair capital-cost burden on existing residential property owners.

The town, says the mayor, has its needed sewage capacity and metering in place. But it is going to need a 2-storey addition to the fire hall to accommodate an added pumper and more personnel. ?I don't believe the townships would share the costs (since Shelburne has the growth and the need),? he said.

In Shelburne, Joe Bojin is in the process of developing an industrial park on 30 Sideroad. He has built the Phase 1 portion of 10,000 square feet and is planning a 30,000 square foot second phase.

?It's gonna cost me \$100,000 more for the next phase,? he said in an interview. But he's planning to proceed next year anyway.

Still, he said, ?Industry doesn't use as much (of the town's services) as residential.? He said it doesn't produce as much sewage, doesn't use the schools, but it provides employment and the employees support the commercial.

He said he has an agreement with the town that was based on the existing DCs. He intends to argue that the town should either honour its original DC for his development, or waive it entirely.

Shelburne Market Village is also set for development, but has been appealed by Loblaw to the Ontario Municipal Board.

CAO John Telfer said he had alerted the developer to the change but it is unfazed by the commercial DC hike, saying its part of the cost of doing business.

A telephone call to Peter Stafl at developer Blackwood Partners had not been returned at press time.

The consultant's DC report forces town council solidly onto the horns of a dilemma.

The DC bylaw must be passed no later than March 16. The bylaw must be accompanied by a study justifying it.

The council's choice is either to pass a bylaw with which it does not entirely agree, or to not pass a bylaw ? in which case it would be unable to collect DCs.

The mayor said the choice of Watson as a consultant was based largely on the fact that it had been the consultant ever since the introduction of DCs.

Now, given the time factor, it would be impossible to contract a new consultant to prepare a new study prior to the deadline for bylaw approval.

Mr. Telfer said there'll be some changes presented to the council on Monday, March 3, and there will be a further meeting on the 10th. If there are major changes, there would be a further public meeting.

By Wes Keller