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No major changes coming from Palgrave Estates review

By Bill Rea

The Town is looking at reviewing its Official Plan policies for the Palgrave Estates Residential Community (PERC), but not much is likely to change.

In fact, it looks like any changes coming will amount to little more than tweaking.

The Town hosted an open house session on the matter last Thursday at Caledon Equestrian Park. Town staff reported there was curiosity, but little concern over what's in the works.

?Theres not a huge change in policy,? Manager of Policy and Sustainability Sylvia Kirkwood commented. ?That's what we're saying.?

She also said a discussion paper on the issue will be going before Town councillors in March.

Information provided by the Town at last week's session stated the policy review is aimed at refining the plans for land-use development in the area, as well as natural heritage protection and other matters involving PERC. It has been planned as a rural and growing estate residential community for more than 40 years. The study is expected to result in minor changes, while maintaining the plan for a low-density, estate community.

The project started with a public meeting in June. The plan is to have a statutory public meeting sometime in the spring or summer, and the final proposal will be going before Town Council for adoption at a time to be determined.

There were issues raised at the June meeting, and there were efforts last week to provide some answers .

The study will be addressing changes that might be required to comply with Provincial or Regional policies.

As of 2016, the population of PERC?is about 3,470, not counting the actual village of Palgrave, with about 1,000 housing units. The plan is for the population to increase to 3,770 and 1,120 units by 2021, 5,010 people and 1,500 units by ?31 and 6,200 resident and 1,800 units by 2041.

As this growth takes place, Regional water services will need to be extended. Sewage servicing will be handled with private, on-site septic systems. The Region doesn't require existing residents to connect to the extended water servicing, although they will be able to hook up at their own expense.

Information provided at last week's meeting stated that feedback from the community indicated people value the low density and small community feel of the area, as well as the natural heritage features. The Town added there's been no indication or direction from any level of government or agency that anything should change. There seems to be agreement that current policy framework is working well.

Councillor Jennifer Innis agreed there are no significant changes planned, adding there's been no real demand for change.

?We're not looking at large-scale changes,? Councillor Nick deBoer added.

He also said he had asked Town staff to look into cluster-style estate development, with an eye toward letting people downsize without having to move from the area. The information from staff at the meeting stated that wouldn't be likely because of the minimum lot size requirements.