

Construction traffic a bother for SouthFields residents

By Bill Rea

As a new community, SouthFields Village is experiencing some growing pains.

Some of them were discussed last Thursday at the quarterly meeting of SouthFields Village Residents' Group.

Kenneth Bokor, one of the founders of the group and team member, observed there are a couple of problems with the community, such as some incidents of vandalism, but he added such 'growing pains' are to be expected.

There are two active developers working on the lands in the area of Kennedy Road, north of Mayfield Road. He said there will eventually be about 2,900 homes accommodating some 10,000 residents. Bokor added there are almost 900 homes occupied now, and the figure might be up to 1,000 by the end of this year. He added that nearby Anthem is expected to have 279 single-detached homes, and between 200 and 210 have been completed.

Tom Baskerville, vice-president of development for Coscorp Inc., acknowledged one of the problems is the fact there is still a lot of construction going on, meaning trucks are tracking mud through the neighbourhood, and in the summer, it's expected there will be a lot of dust too.

Baskerville agreed it's 'aggravating,' warning the coming year might be one of the worst in this regard.

He said a property at the north end of the development, west of Kennedy, used to house a landscaping and topsoil business. Work has been going on to decommission the site and clear out material, but trucks still have to go in and out. As well, he said new homes are going in at the north end this year, and construction traffic is obliged to access the site from the south.

Baskerville also said earthwork is slated to begin on the lands north of SouthFields Village Public School, with fill being imported to raise grades to facilitate storm water management, meaning there are going to be lots of chances to generate more mud.

'There's no one area that's generating mud,' he remarked.

He added Town policy requires daily scraping of the road to clean things up, but he admitted 'that does a so-so job.'

He did say that as the weather gets warmer, there will be water trucks out to flush along the streets, but they can't be used in freezing conditions.

Baskerville said these matters will be dealt with responsibly, but that didn't satisfy all of the roughly 60 people at the meeting.

One man complained about the poor job that's been done in all weather.

'There's a lot of things you can do,' he charged.

Councillor Allan Thompson said there are restrictions on what can be done. He pointed out having the construction trucks travel south is part of the development agreement, adding roads to the north aren't up to handling such heavy trucks.

The man said construction trailers could be moved to the north, but Baskerville said they were placed early in the process, and they don't want to move them around much so the public will know where they are.

'I still think you can do a lot better,' the man said, adding people living in the southern part of the neighbourhood should have a clean area. 'There's a lot of stuff you can do.'

There were also concerns expressed about the trucks running local stop signs. One man said he's told police about this, adding he's worried for the safety of his children.

'These guys have total disregard,' he declared, adding he wasn't just talking about rolling stops, but running right through the intersections. 'You just have to sit there and watch.'

Baskerville said Caledon OPP is aware of the issue. He added when truckers get hired in developments such as this, they sign on to certain procedures, and those documents all stress respect for the community.

Bokor added they are trying to get a speed radar sign set up in the village to warn people if they are speeding.

Thompson also suggested people note the licence numbers of offending trucks and report them to RoadWatch.

Addressing other issues in the development, Thompson said there are lands to the southeast, along Heart Lake Road, that are zoned for future light industrial uses, but nothing has been approved yet.

Bokor added there are lands that are being held for the potential realignment of Highway 410. 'It's a plan, a study, that's going to take a few years,' he commented.

He added there are other rezonings in the works for the area. There were two public information meetings in February to discuss plans for two pieces of property that are being eyed for about 260 homes. These proposals haven't gone before Town council yet. He added there's another rezoning in the works for lands at the northeast corner of Kennedy and Dougall Avenue, but there's still to be a formal public information meeting on that plan.

In addition, Bokor said there are plans for about 100,000 square feet of commercial development.

In terms of parks in the area, Bokor said they are in the works, as well as open spaces, including one known as Village Blue, that will be centrally located in the development as sort of a meeting space for the village. He added it was covered in this year's Town budget.