

Residents start hearing about commercial development in SouthFields

By Bill Rea

The ongoing development of SouthFields Village remains a work in progress, with a commercial component in the works.

A crowd of residents were out last week for the quarterly meeting of the SouthFields Village Residents Group.

Parm Chahal from English Prestige gave a brief outline on a proposal for a commercial site, which is being envisioned for the northwest corner of Kennedy Road and Dougall Avenue.

Chahal said there have been studies conducted to try and determine what the community needs and wants.

He also praised the residents who were on hand for the meeting on being very pro-active in the development of their community.

'It will pay off for you guys,' he said. 'It will be beneficial. Keep at it.'

He also pointed out the village is a caring community, adding potential retail tenants look for that.

There will eventually be about 30,000 people living in the commercial catchment area, meaning there will be a need for a mixture of tenants.

One of the operations that's planned for the site is a day-care facility. Chahal said this is the type of tenant that helps bring communities together.

Kenneth Bokor, one of the founders of the residents' group, added there have been a number of residents asking for such a centre.

Chahal did observe the zoning of the area doesn't allow daycare, but he said Town staff and councillors are working with them on that.

He added the daycare is being eyed for the north end of the site. They are looking at some kind of financial institution to the south, with an anchor store to the southeast. He said Shoppers Drug Mart has shown interest.

Chahal also said they are not looking at big box store, as that wouldn't reflect the community.

He did say it's critical to get on with the planning process on this. Other uses that are being considered include a restaurant (such as a pizza establishment), dental office, chiropractor clinic, beauty salon, etc. Chahal added there is quite a range of uses that would be permitted, such as convenience and grocery stores, offices, dry cleaners, etc.

The plans that Chahal showed the meeting included a lot of room for parking. One man commented that there's been a lot of talk of making the village walkable. Chahal said a lot of walking traffic could be expected there, especially in the summer.

Bokor added it's been designated a walking community, with everything within it planned to be within a 15-minute walk.

Mayor Marolyn Morrison commented planning for this community started about 20 years ago.

'I really wanted a 'down town,' she said, pointing out people support the businesses in the core of their communities. The mayor lives in Inglewood, and she said there is a lot of support for the general store there.

'You live in the community here,' she told the audience. 'You want that community feel.'

Morrison also said the Town is looking at setting up a community policing office somewhere in the village.