

Town looking at parking near Terra Cotta Community Centre

By Bill Rea

Town of Caledon staff is taking another look at the parking situation on High Street in Terra Cotta to see if needs of the local community centre can be balanced with safety concerns.

The street runs from King Street in the eastern portion of the hamlet and ends at Isabella Street.

Town staff had recommended last week that on-street parking be banned on the street, but Councillor Johanna Downey was successful in getting her colleagues to defer the matter so staff could work with the community on this. Public Works Director David Loveridge said a viable solution might be possible if they can get all parties at the table.

Staff reported there have been complaints about vehicles parking on High Street. It's a narrow road, and there have been concerns that parked cars cause safety concerns, as well as block emergency vehicles.

There was also a petition from High Street residents, calling for no parking there.

"High Street is a very quiet, narrow residential road," the petition statement said. "Its rural nature is the reason many of the residents chose to move to this street. There are many children using the road for access to school and recreation. It's used as access to the Caledon Trailway."

The petition was received by the Town in September. Staff said they conducted an on-street parking review. They established the street varies in paved width from 5.7 to 6.5 metres, and the standard width of a fire route is six metres. The staff report added there is insufficient width on the shoulders for parking.

Staff pointed out there is "significant demand" for parking there because the Terra Cotta Community Centre is on High Street, and there is limited parking on site, and not much chance to expand the parking lot. The report added such an expansion would also be expensive.

The report said the current standard is to have at least 8.6 metres of paved roadway for parking to be allowed on one side of the street, and 11.1 metres for both sides.

High Street resident Kathryn Holleran addressed council, stating she was representing all residents of the street.

"We feel strongly that safety is of paramount importance on a residential street," she said, adding in the interest of safety, they can't have the street blocked by parked cars.

She also said snow removal in the winter is a concern too.

Holleran said parking has become more of a problem in recent years.

She also cited the staff report that the road is not wide enough to permit parking on the side.

Holleran also commented on the petition, stating all the residents of the street are in favour of it.

She pointed out when large events are held at the community centre, there is overflow parking on the street.

She also said there were two occasions last summer when ambulances were called to an address on the street, and she said it was fortunate there was no major events at the community centre at the time. Holleran added that during the school year, there are five buses using the street to pick up and drop off students, and parked cars can hamper them.

She also said there had been a recent sale at the community centre and people on the street had to adjust their plans because there were blockages from the overflow parking.

Donna Cragg, representing the community centre board, agreed with the safety concerns, but she said there's been street parking for years without any incidents. She also pointed out it took a lot of effort within the community to redevelop the centre.

Cragg was appealing for a "second sober look at this," to help find a way to let the community centre continue to flourish, while addressing the local safety concerns.

Cragg told Councillor Barb Shaughnessy there are about two events per month at the centre.

Shaughnessy wondered about widening the road. "How does a community centre flourish if there's no parking?" she asked.

Loveridge said he could look into it, but warned there would be a number of factors involved, including geography.

"Anything is possible with dollars," he added.

Community centre board president David Rutherford said they could come up with some suggestions, but he said the board had only learned this issue was going before council just a couple of days before.

Cragg also said parking issues there had come up before the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) in 2009. Rutherford told Councillor Nick deBoer that hearing was part of an appeal regarding the hall. DeBoer said it was decided at the time there were no concerns about overflow parking on High Street.

Downey was disappointed with the situation, adding a system's been set up to put people in the community against each other. She

said it's hard to go against a concern for safety, but did ask that the community get the chance to address the matter.



There are concerns that High Street, near the Terra Cotta Community Centre is too narrow to safely permit on-street parking.