

Six storey Holiday Inn site plan approved by Council



By Brock Weir

A site plan for a new Holiday Inn Express was given the thumbs-up at Council this week, paving the way for a six-storey 110 suite hotel near Wellington Street and Highway 404.

The hotel development is slated to front Highway 404 at 95 Eric T. Smith Away, which is part of the Aurora Business Park development at Leslie Street and Don Hillock Drive.

The site plan by Gottardo Construction allows for a 6,612 square feet facility on part of a 10 acre site.

The hotel itself and associated parking lot will take up two acres of the site, the balance of which will be set aside for business park purposes.

The hotel plan proposes a business and dining area, a board room, business centre, fitness area, a large meeting room that can be divided into two, a guest laundry and a pool.

A total of 119 parking spaces, including six barrier free spaces, will be part of the development, but this is 48 spaces lower than what would be typically allowed for a hotel of this size.

This minor variance, as well as adjustments to lot area and building height, have been previously approved by Aurora's Committee of Adjustment.

Given the Town's goal of promoting development of their employment lands and given that this application is being processed by the Office of Business Concierge team as part of the economic development, staff are recommending site plan approval at this time, subject to the resolution of any outstanding issues, said Fausto Filipetto, Senior Policy Planner for the Town of Aurora, in his report to Council.

The hotel plans, including the architect's renderings received a warm reception at Council last week, but some wanted to make sure that with the reduced parking standards already approved, that leeway would be given if there is any need for on-street parking.

This is our new hotel, which is very exciting, and I am pleased to know we're going to have one, said Councillor Wendy Gaertner.

We're allowing a third less parking, approximately, than is required by our bylaws. My understanding would be that any hotel would plan for capacity. What are we going to do with all of these cars, if they should come?

Marco Ramunno, Aurora's Director of Planning, told the Councillor that staff reviewed the planners' request and they submitted a parking study along with their variance application.

We're confident with the current supply of parking, he said. Any applicant was very satisfied with the amount of parking spaces will satisfy their needs and it is more than one space per hotel room. Staff was in support of the parking supply, so we don't feel there is a concern with the under supply of parking.

Nevertheless, Councillor Gaertner remained concerned.

If people are parking on the street in this area, she said, I am hoping that Bylaw will not ticket these people.