

Timberlane redevelopment delayed after concerns from Van-Rob

By Brock Weir

Developers looking to transform Timberlane Athletic Club into a residential community might have squared things with their new neighbours, but plans to proceed with the plan hit a speedbump last week after an area business raised concerns.

Brookfield Homes, the new owners of the Timberlane land on Vandorf Sideroad, were before Council last week to pitch a proposed site amendment in the second Public Planning meeting dedicated to the redevelopment plan.

Their latest plan differs significantly from what was initially before Council ? and neighbours.

The first time around, Brookfield proposed a development of 77 units, consisting of a mix of townhouses, semi-detached units and single detached homes. Through consultation and meetings with area neighbours, however, the latest iteration has reduced the plan to 56 units, all single detached.

The plan also includes larger buffers between the new neighbourhood and surrounding uses.

?Tonight, I would like to thank each and every Councillor for their support as we worked over these last months with the people of Brookfield to reach an accommodation,? said resident John Greenhough, representing Falconwood Estates. ?I am pleased to say that subject to other arrangements we have reached a compromise and we now withdraw any and all objections we expressed on a previous basis in this chamber.?

While the Falconwood residents are happy, one local business is not.

Representatives from Van-Rob, the large-scale stamping plant on Vandorf Sideroad that employs approximately 700 people, however, urged Council to delay their approval of the plan.

According to Patricia Foran, legal counsel for Van-Rob, the company already spent over \$2 million in recent years to mitigate the impact vibration and noise emanating from their factory would have on nearby residences, and a new development on the site of Timberlane could put them back at square one.

?We ask that you defer your consideration and direct staff to retain expert peer review consultants and have them consult with my own client and their own experts respecting the issue of noise, vibration and traffic concerns,? said Ms. Foran. ?[My client remains] concerned about the impact of additional residential development and new neighbours coming into the area in proximity to their manufacturing operation.?

Compounding the issue, she said, was the classification of Van-Rob as a Class 2 Industry under Ministry of the Environment Guidelines in the report currently before Council. The business should really be considered a Class 3, the ?most intensive and incompatible type of development? to residential, she added.

?The potential for incompatibility is significant and the potential for complaints to new residents is very significant as well,? she said. ?It is more difficult for industry to operate in proximity to residential development when they are Class 3. It is particularly important and difficult for them to update their approvals from the Ministry of the Environment when they have new residential development closer to their operations.?

Van-Rob operates 24 hours a day and existing studies completed by Brookfield did not take this into account. Brookfield, on the other hand, argued they completed their studies at what they understood was at a particularly high traffic time.

Nevertheless, if the development goes ahead as planned without further mitigation measures, Van-Rob will have to update their certificates of approval with the Ministry, which could prove very costly to the business. Having incoming residents sign affidavits

saying they would not complain about noise did not go far enough, added Van-Rob co-owner Peter Van Schaik.

?We thought we were well protected with having [other residents] do so, however, we were not aware that of environmental concerns that would affect somebody's health, it doesn't mean a thing if you sign a document like that,? he said. ?This is our big concern. We take all the risk. If there are complaints, the developer has no risk because it is not his concern.?

Council ultimately agreed with Van-Rob's request to delay approval until a peer review could take place on what had been submitted so far. In their approval, they set a one month time limit for this to take place.

?I am very pleased to hear the residents have worked with the developer and have come to an acceptable agreement about density,? said Councillor Wendy Gaertner, who raised a number of concerns of her own about density. ?Van Rob is a very important employer to the Town, employs a lot of people, and has been here for a long time. It adds prestige to the community. I believe if they have concerns and they have taken the trouble to request their lawyer to be at this meeting, I believe we have to address their issues. A few weeks in the grand scheme of things is not going to make much difference.?

Others, however, had their reservations. Mayor Geoff Dawe, for instance, said he supported Van-Rob, but wanted a different approach.

?It is not fair to a corporation that has been there for years and has invested a lot of money just in terms of setting up a new business, let alone new mitigation,? he said. ?It is not fair to someone who has bought a piece of land that has residential development rights on it. I think there are some larger issues we need to deal with.?