

Churches want exemption from building fees

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Hilton said.

The department is in the process of producing such a document, said Tom Parry, director of development services.

"Churches should be exempt from these charges," Councillor Rob Hargrave said. "If we don't support our own community and the people in it, we really are not doing our jobs."

Commercial and industrial developments are only charged 2 per cent for parkland, Mr. Parker said.

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Councillor Rob Hargrave

Mayor Sue Sherban said churches have "been taking care of our park issues for the past 30 or 40 years by making their land available for the public."

The official sod-turning at Christ Church Anglican took place last month.

"We have outgrown the existing facility," Father Rob Shields said.

An average of 200 people come to worship there every Sunday morning. A new parish hall that will seat 300 people will be added at the back of the existing church building, which will be gutted so more classrooms, offices and a large new entrance can be built.

The addition of a commercial kitchen means parishioners will no longer have to wash dishes by hand after large events.

The new parking lot will have 112 parking spaces, including four handicapped spots.

The new building will make it easier for the church to hold its increasingly popular Lenten suppers, which served 900 people during the time leading up to Easter, as well as pancake suppers and other parish events.

"We have already had interest from some outside groups to make use of (the new building)," Fr. Shields said.

Funding has come from a grant from the Anglican Diocese of Toronto as well as fundraising by the congregation. Members have raised more than \$500,000, surpassing their original goal of \$450,000.

The anticipated completion date is next January.

Springvale Baptist Church has a new addition planned of around 70,000-square-foot.

Church member Al Brooks said Springvale is being hit with close to \$700,000 for development charges and a letter of credit before getting the building permit. The church also faced a cash-in-lieu of parkland payment, but since it paid the fee during a previous expansion, it won't be charged for parkland again. Mr. Brooks suggested development charges be spread over several years to make it easier on the congregation.

"Non-profit organizations should have a lower rate structure than developers," he said.

With close to 500 people coming to

worship Sunday mornings and another 300 or more adults and children attending Sunday school, more room is badly needed at Springvale.

When the first phase of construction is completed in about a year, the church will have an auditorium that can seat 1,100, a double gymnasium, large foyer, offices, kitchen and Sunday School classrooms.

The second phase involves finishing the interior of the auditorium at a later date.

The church is also looking to develop soccer and baseball fields for use by the community.

"We want the facility to be multi-purpose and user-friendly," Pastor Bob Flemming said.

The church owns 15 acres of land at the site.

Construction of phase one at Springvale Baptist Church is expected to cost about \$7 million. Funds raised by the congregation will be augmented by bonds and a mortgage.

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