



Stonebridge development trying to do it right



Joanne Saunders photo
Ellen Riches, who invites speakers for Breakfast at the Beach, listens intently as the Dec. 10 speaker, Mark Crowe, of Stonebridge makes a point.

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Wasaga's 'Mayor Cal', as he is affectionately known, has said that trying to satisfy the needs and wants of tourists as well as those of full-time residents presents an enormous challenge.

The Stonebridge by the Bay development, with its combination of services, appears to be heading down the right path in that respect. The retail outlets and variety of restaurants provide easy access to services at the eastern entrance to the town.

The perhaps less charming appearance of commercial buildings has been softened by plantings of shrubs and mature trees, wide grassy areas, a gazebo style band shell, seashore style townhome residences and walking trails that wind through natural wooded areas and past large tranquil ponds. Ducks and other wildfowl, flora and fauna have already staked their claim as residents move into their new homes.

"It's important to create a positive relationship" with people in the town, the president of Stonebridge Building Group, Mark Crowe, told a Dec. 10 Wasaga Beach Chamber of Commerce breakfast gathering at Boston Pizza.

The meeting was attended by local business people, along with some council members and Mayor Cal, newly elected as Warden of Simcoe County.

"Our efforts to date have all been about partnerships," Crowe said, pointing out that working in conjunction with council and other organizations benefits both partners.

The first priority of Stonebridge developer Hamount Investments was to widen Main Street to four lanes. That was not in the town's budget for the next few years so the developer fronted the town its portion of the necessary funding.

When Wasaga Distribution told Crowe that more power was needed for the development, the Stonebridge management chose to construct a residential style façade to house the electrical facility, creating the look of a home instead of an austere commercial building.

In concert with the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority, the developer is completing the re-naturalization of the Morest campground. "There is now a trail system through there," Crowe said.

Stonebridge has offered to work with the town and the library board to provide land for the building of a new library. "We'd like to see the library come to the development," Crowe said.