

Hastings Highlands debating residential shipping containers

By Sarah Sobanski

Hastings Highlands council is weighing the pros and cons of shipping containers in residential areas, due to the increasing interest in alternative forms of housing.

Hastings Highlands has recognized the increase of shipping containers on residential properties for storage and other uses by residents in its municipality. This includes residents who are looking for [40' storage containers for sale](#) for housing and storage purposes. It is now considering regulations for local containers for zoning, uses, size, numbers permitted, location and aesthetics.

'We should require a greater setback to visually screen them from city and residential lands. [We should] have them used for storage only, all labelling should be removed and they should be painted a designated solid neutral colour only,' said Councillor Nancy Matheson on possible regulations.

Council accepted a report for possible regulations at its Aug. 24 meeting. The report comes after planning staff was directed to process an application to amend shipping container zoning bylaw in September of last year.

Councillors discussed a zoning bylaw permit fee for shipping containers. Containers average 200 square feet in size where a building permit in Ontario is needed for over 108 square feet. It was suggested that permits could range from \$100 to \$250 based on other municipalities where containers are allowed on non-residential properties.

'There are residences, people could still get an engineered design, and a zone bylaw amendment and then qualify for a building permit to actually put one up,' said Matheson. 'Currently in other provinces, there are entire streets using containers as innovative high end homes and others as economical solutions for homelessness for those who cannot afford traditional housing.'

Shipping containers are currently reused for pop-up shops in Toronto markets. Architects across the country have also used them to design eco-friendly homes, renovating the containers and stacking them on top of each other.

Council has had complaints about shipping containers in the area from locals. This fueled the need to create bylaws surrounding the containers.

'Personally, I think they're great options to have as a storage area,' said Councillor Tracy Hagar. 'They are definitely a lot more secure than any of the other sheds available. They're cost effective; they get a lot more for their dollar with these. I think the idea of having people paint them would be a good idea, just so they are not an eyesore for neighbours.'