

Hamilton Twp. reluctant supporter of plan

BY LEONE KLITZKE

With some reluctance and a lot of hesitation Hamilton township council last night voted 3-2 to support in principle the Northumberland Mall shopping centre proposed for the County Fair.

The council voted to adopt the minutes of their planning board in which the board recommends that the council support the mall.

Voting to support the mall were Deputy-reeve Cliff White, and Councillors Jack Avery and Bill Heenan. Opposed were Reeve Lloyd Williams and

Charlotte Clay who both felt the township should not interfere in the affairs of another municipality.

A group of about 15 people, mostly mall supporters, who came to hear the township's decision left before the decision was actually made last night. The council chamber was unbearably hot and the council delayed their decision until the end of the meeting.

The issue was raised early on the agenda when Bill Heenan proposed a resolution that the council support in principle the Northumberland Mall rezoning.

Charlotte Clay argued that there was a difference between supporting the Northumberland Mall in principle and the rezoning of the land which is the subject of next week's Ontario Municipal Board hearing.

Heenan agreed to change his motion. He said in the past Cobourg had not interfered in Hamilton's business and he felt Hamilton shouldn't be "sticking our nose into Cobourg's business." But he said he had received many calls supporting the mall and felt he had to make the motion to represent the people.

"I'm not asking for a letter to be sent or a lawyer to be present," he said.

Jack Avery said he personally supported the mall but he did not feel the township should enter into a controversy on the issue.

He said he was "caught in between" and the matter was best left in the hands of those who were building the mall and those who opposed it. He didn't feel Hamilton Township's input would have any effect on the OMB decision which would be made on the basis of whether the mall was feasible or not, he said.

"Personally I would like to see

it," he said, "for the continuance of the free enterprise system and the right of a developer to develop a piece of land. But that's just a personal opinion...I would sooner the motion was withdrawn."

Heenan and White withdrew the motion supporting the mall and the matter was tabled to the end of the meeting.

At that stage Charlotte Clay moved that "no action" be taken on the matter. She wanted the council to "receive" the planning board minutes but not "adopt" them. She said the mall may be a good idea but it was

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not really Hamilton Township's business.

Williams said the issue was not whether the mall was good or bad.

"Cobourg has taken a position (opposing the mall) and they have presumably done that after a great deal of study and consideration," he said. Hamilton and Cobourg did not have a joint planning agreement and should not interfere unless the project had a direct impact on the township roads system or other facilities.

Williams said most residents were convinced of the need for improved shopping facilities and that Northumberland Mall was a good location. But he said the township was "not knowledgeable about the alternatives." He would not object to a motion supporting improved shopping facilities without specifying the location, he said.

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Avery argued that non-support of the Northumberland Mall could be construed as support of the harbor shopping mall proposed by Chartwood. He did not support the harbor mall, he said.

There was no seconder to a motion by Charlotte Clay that the council "receive" the planning board minutes which meant that no action would be taken on the matter.

Cliff White's motion to

"adopt" the planning board minutes was supported by Heenan and Avery but opposed by Williams and Clay.

In effect, when the council "adopts" minutes of a planning board meeting they are supporting the recommendations made by the board.

Last night's meeting was attended by several members of the citizen's committee supporting the mall including Cobourg Councillor Ray Bowen and Lenah Fisher.

Write twp. a letter opposing mall

Port Hope businessman Robin Long and his wife Catherine sent a letter, opposing the Northumberland Mall shopping centre rezoning in Cobourg, to Hamilton township council last night.

The Long's said they wished to go on record as opposing the Northumberland Mall and they

hoped Hamilton township council would not support it.

"We do not believe that there is sufficient retail business in the area to support the existing Port Hope and Cobourg downtown areas and, in addition, the proposed mall," the letter said.

The letter was received and filed by the township council last night.