

Exchange need questioned

CANNIFTON--A request has been made by Thurlow Township council for Bell Canada to survey the need for a the present Thurlow phone exchange.

An individual area of the township--formerly provided with phone service from a private company--has a '477' number with the bulk of the township included in the Belleville exchange. Although people with the Thurlow number can call toll-free to Tweed, Trenton--which is toll free for Belleville--is long distance along with Deseronto.

Councillor Kay Summers--herself a Thurlow exchange customer--said rates have increased by two times in the past years, questioning the need for a separate exchange for about two pages of telephone book listings.

Bell Canada area manager George Thompson explained to council that most of the problems revolve around exchange boundaries, many established in the early 1900's. The Thurlow exchange was bought by Bell in 1964. Thompson indicated that if a change was made, 477 exchange customers would lose toll-free call privileges to Tweed. He added that about 50 cents per month would be added to phone bills in Roslin and Plainfield also noting that four party maximums are included in the present Thurlow exchange.

Thompson said any survey would have to have about 65 percent of the customers in favor of a change. Council noted that the northern part of the township would likely vote against a switch because of closer ties with Tweed while Thompson added Bell Canada could also veto the proposal.

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Province backs stats, says Thurlow doesn't need more units for seniors

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By JIM PALMATATEER
Staff Reporter

CANNIFTON--An updated survey of needs of seniors citizens in Thurlow Township for rental accommodation won't be forthcoming from the ministry of housing although council here has left the door open for a higher number of allotted units.

Wednesday council approved a motion for the ministry that will allow Thurlow residents to assume residence at a housing project in Sidney Township with Thurlow being responsible for the seven and one-half per cent operating deficit applicable to its residents. With three apartments available at the project--sponsored by the Orange Lodge--council left its re-

quirements open in the motion that could see some later development in the township. A ministry study showed an apparent need for only five subsidized units.

Council met again with ministry of housing officials Sid Palmer and Craig McCulloch to discuss the survey of Thurlow seniors but met with little satisfaction in obtaining an update. Council indicated it believes the need for housing is higher than what the survey suggests.

McCulloch--who conducted the actual survey and tabulated the results for the report--said of the 538 seniors households in the township surveyed, only 100 responded. Council felt that was a low figure although McCulloch said a 20 per cent return in such surveys is higher than normal.

Of the survey, 50 parties indicated they were unsure whether or not they wanted senior accommodation with only nine people qualifying in the group showing the most need.

"The biggest thing is the 50 who don't know," McCulloch said. "If they don't know, what can we do. You can't expect an apartment to be built with no real knowledge of need."

Deputy-reeve George Beer said council believes the number requiring residences is higher adding that many interested people didn't forward the questionnaire to the ministry. He added that council does not know why people rejected the form although said that the specific questions about personal wealth and holdings likely hindered the response.

McCulloch replied. "How can we come up with figures when people won't fill the forms out? I need to know specifics."

Councillor Kay Summers expressed disappointment that government bearing on the project is strictly on financing and not the social and physical aspects.

"We have guidelines," said housing official Sid Palmer. "With restraints we must be realistic. There can't be assisted housing for everyone. Many seniors can be in the private sector."

Palmer suggested a number of alternatives for Thurlow including private agreements for accommodation where there could be government assistance for a

certain number of units. With the Frankford seniors complex set to open April 1, the ministry has secured an agreement from Sidney Township to drop its resident requirement, amended to allow three non-residents occupancy.

"Fifty per cent of those units are available to Thurlow Township with quite a number of applications from Thurlow being received for the 16 other units in the building," Palmer said.

Palmer told council that the ministry of housing will not construct buildings under 25 units with the township's best hope lying in consideration of private accommodation that can be subsidized to a certain extent. "I can't do anything if they don't res-

tent. He also suggested community-sponsored housing project where there can be a 25 per cent subsidy on units.

"Right now there is no response so there is no need," Palmer told council. "Updating the survey is very premature when we have a current survey. The response may be regrettable but that's the way it is."

Palmer told council after more questioning for a survey update; that it could only be completed until a survey of need is carried out in Tyendinaga Township. That is about one year away. He indicated that need from Tyendinaga could be blended with Thurlow in the same way that Thurlow residents are being allowed occupancy at the Sidney Township units.