

Opinion

Why planning?

by Gloria Browne

Last week's Free Press contained several references to planning and this started me wondering how much we know about planning and why it is necessary in our modern society.

One of the most obvious functions of the planning process is to create an orderly, healthy, efficient, convenient and attractive environment for human living. The achievement of this objective depends upon official planning and most of all local consciousness of planning.

The public is not always aware that the physical environment has capabilities of beauty, convenience, order and economy. Land use and space, landscape and buildings, residential and industrial balance, the making of arrangements in the present to achieve objectives in the future, are not terms that are considered by the public at large. But the planner must think about these terms and their importance, and is often forced into the role of social critic and advocate of these views because the community has no clear views of its own about its physical environment.

Until the community provides the planner with a clearly articulated image of the kind of environment it wants, the planner must think about it in terms of his experience. This is unfortunate because the public should participate in the planning process, and should have a clear idea of the objective it wishes to achieve. It is a fundamental principle in our kind of society that social goals should be determined by the people, and not by the government or its employees. But it must be a public that is informed and aware and therefore it is a citizen's responsibility to become informed and aware of the problems of modern communities and how best to cope with these problems.

Without the benefit of the community's own self-image and progressive thinking the planner will likely have to continue in his awkward role of social critic, image-maker, technical adviser and general whipping-boy.

Canada has achieved the transition from an agricultural society to an industrialized urban society in a few decades. Assimilation that took hundreds of years to evolve in European nations. Yet within the next generation we will have as much urban development as has been built in all the years since the nation was established. Cities will for the most part double in population and treble in area. Unless there are more efforts to control land usage, retain conservation land and green belt areas, stop pollution of our watersheds and the air we breathe, it will be impossible to preserve good living conditions and healthy standards for future generations.

The low density, mass suburbia of to-day is segregating our people into conforming standards of income-group, age-group, by economic activity, and a general blandness which masks the serious social problems that are bound to evolve from the lack of communication and inter-relation between different kinds of people.

The why of planning then is to bring order and logical development to Canadian Society without conformity and lack of identity. Inexperienced rural municipalities without sound planning practices are being swamped by the tide of urban sprawl. Single-family subdivisions areas that are identical from coast to coast are becoming a national problem. Regional, historical, cultural and topographic differences are being submerged as the picture window, the television aerial, the bungalow-box on the ranch-style house and the septic-tank or spiraling sewage disposal costs become parts of the image of Canadian life.

Is this mass sameness the image that we want? Are our young people to-day restless because they are unconsciously struggling against being swallowed up in this image of blandness and conformity?

Editor's Note: Mrs. Browne is a student in the community planning course at Sheridan College.

Appeals committee decision

Robert A. Hurren of R.R. 2, Campbellville, appealed a decision made by Nassagaweya Committee of Adjustment to the Ontario Municipal Board at Brookville Municipal Hall. Mr. Hurren had earlier applied to the Committee of Adjustment for a land separation.

William Greenwood, member of the O.M.B. heard Mr. Hurren's appeal but reserved any official decision until the Department of Municipal Affairs dealt with the Township's Official Plan of Subdivisions and Zoning By-law. The Township had been waiting approval of the plan and the By-law for some time.

Mr. Hurren requested permission to sell two parcels of land. He explained he had lived on the property in question, (just south of Campbellville) all his life and had always intended to keep one parcel for his home, give one to his son and sell the two remaining parcels as a source of income.

On March 27 he sold the two parcels and applied for a severance before reaching a settlement. The committee of adjustment refused the severance because it would leave land without sufficient frontage, size or area. According to the official plan, there must be 350 feet frontage on a minimum area of five acres.

Mr. Hurren's property if severed would leave a frontage of 130 feet and a depth of 160 feet.

Although Mr. Greenwood reserved his decision he gave no indication that the forthcoming ruling would contravene the decision of the Committee of Adjustment.

"This is unfortunate Mr. Hurren, if you had acted sooner you may have been successful, but you are like many others who seem to be caught in the middle. However, I don't want to hold this as any hope for a new decision," he said.

Up until April 3, 1967, the council had heard requests for separations of small holdings under 10 acres and if council passed the application it went before the minister and the Department of Municipal Affairs for approval.

Up until this year the township was without a Committee of Adjustment. When council deemed it necessary to have a Committee of Adjustment they learned they must have an Official Plan of Subdivision first. The Official Plan gives the Committee of Adjustment criteria on which to base their decisions. Before the Official Plan is any good the township has to have a Zoning By-law which in effect puts teeth into the Official Plan. Both of these have been passed by the Township and are now awaiting approval from the Department of Municipal Affairs.

Acton school boards will be eliminated by new legislation

On January 1, 1969, 1,600 Ontario school boards will be chopped to 100 boards.

Formation of 100 county boards will eliminate Acton public school board and Acton District high school board - instead, Acton will send one representative to a new Halton County Board of Education.

Announcement of the change was made by Premier John Roberts at a meeting in Galt last week. It came as no surprise to members of the two local boards, although neither board has had any official word from the Ontario Department of Education about the change.

A joint report of the Halton public school consultative committee and secondary school consultative committee was submitted to county council last April, recommending the single county board.

On the recommended board would be 22 representatives to blanket the county - but Acton, Milton, Nassagaweya and Esquesing are only delegated one representative each. Georgetown would have two, Burlington and Oakville eight each.

The report of this consultative committee was not acceptable to all county municipalities, including Burlington and Oakville. A special county committee was formed to look into the matter further. Now it is apparent that county report has come very close to the government's intention.

Commented public school board chairman Orval Chapman, "I just know what I read in the papers!"

He was opposed to suggestions that the M.Z. Bennett school addition should be held up, waiting for a possible new financing arrangement through the county board of education. "Another year's delay might really botch things up," he felt.

While he thinks the new board will have its advantages, he feels Acton just having one board member is regrettable. But if the town grows, as Lakeview subdivision is, it's possible Acton would have more representation.

High school board chairman Tom Watson and board members also just learned the news from papers. They were expecting a similar change, following the consultative committee report.

"I'm very much in favor of it," said Mr. Watson. "It's the only practical way to give every student in Ontario equal opportunity in all phases."

Legislation to impose the new boundaries will be imposed at the next session of the legislature. The new units will be based on county boundaries in Halton and the rest of southern Ontario, but the school units will be larger in the north.

The Smith Committee on Taxation in Ontario has recommended that boards of education levy their own taxes.

Mr. Roberts says the larger school units will make it possible to extend to all students the benefits enjoyed by the more favored school system. Equalized costs will also result, he said.

He stressed also that the government is not, by implication, "designating the county as the basis for any system of regional government which may be adopted in the future."

On the consultative committee which came up with the same solution as the Department of Education for the county are: Public school board consultative committee - E. Gudgeon, Burlington; L.E. Andrews, Nassagaweya; J.H. Creighton, Acton; O.R. Morgenstern, Georgetown; J.E. Peat, Oakville, with inspector W.L. McNeil and inspector I.C. Harris.

Schools should be administered on some other basis than by counties, said the Ontario Teachers' Federation in a statement issued commenting on Premier Roberts' announcement that counties will be the school administration units by 1969.

The teachers contended that in many instances counties no longer have any economic, geographic or sociological entity.

HUMAN CONTACT

Frederick II, the 13th-century Emperor of Sicily, we are told, wished to learn what was natural language. He arranged for foster parents to rear children natively, without speech or prattle, to see whether they would spontaneously speak Hebrew or Greek or whatever. "But he labored in vain, because the children all died. For they could not live without the petting and joyful faces and loving words of their foster mothers." So wrote Sallustiana of Parma 600 years ago.

POET'S CORNER

AUTUMN LEAVES

When I hear a cruel tree-saw snarling through a precious tree, Then, oh, very dire and vengeful are the inmost thoughts of me, I've wept sorely at the screeches set my throbbing heart a-saw, And I've cried, "O darling maple, is there nothing I can do?"

They have majesty in autumn, etched upon a sunset sky, And their very shameless nakedness is pleasing to the eye; And as oft they blossom out again, all verdant in the spring, Then my soul, exultant, wakens at the beauty that they bring.

Kind, she feeds us from the bounty of her richly-flowing breast, And she gives us shade in summer, where the weary ones may rest, She's the emblem of our country, proudly blazoned on our flag, And the whole world pays us homage, when we flaunt this regal tag.

So, all hail then, lovely maple, verdant green or ruby red, How my heart swells with emotion, when I hear your praises said! Yet, when autumn steals her glory and bestrewns it on the ground, I confess my commendation is not always so profound.

For I've raked and raked her leaves until I think they are all gone, But again do I discover, when I waken with the dawn, That she's spread another carpet even thicker than before, And I wring my calloused fingers, gnarled and rough and red and sore.

Then you have to get a permit just to burn them anywhere, For your neighbours are indignant if you leave them lying there; And a caper of the west wind blows theirs wildly all around, 'Till at last they lie, exhausted, on my tiny plot of ground.

Oh, of course I love the maple, she is truly nature's star, But, at times, I have misgivings that outweigh my love by far; And I wish some kindly fairy would sneak all around the town, And, when I am lost in slumber, hack and chop the danged things down.

- Isobel Anderson

Police report occurrences

In their weekly account, Acton O.P.P. detachment reports total miles travelled during the week were 801 during the 168 duty hours worked. Traffic activities resulted in three charges and 15 warnings being issued under violations of the Highway Traffic Act.

There was one personal injury accident investigated involving one motor vehicle. Damage totalled \$1800 and no charges were laid in this incident.

Occurrences were unusually light, with three incidents investigated, two cases of assault with one charge being laid and one investigation of malicious damage.

There was no docket at Magistrate's Court, Milton this week, most of the volume of cases having been put over till a later date.

This completes the week's activities which were relatively minimal compared to some.

Firefighters extend one night canvass

Falling to cover all the town on their scheduled one night of canvassing for muscular dystrophy, Acton Firefighters nevertheless counted over \$400 Monday night. They were continuing their canvass last night to call at all homes.

This appeal is made annually by the Brigade. This year's will obviously again be very successful.

Mixed reaction to board

The province's plan to scrap 1,600 local school boards in Ontario and replace them with 100 county boards of education, announced last week in a speech by Premier John Roberts, has been greeted with mixed enthusiasm by Halton County municipal and education officials.

The plan is almost identical to a local proposal that was earlier drafted by the Halton Consultative Committee on Education. But Oakville and Burlington succeeded in having the Halton Board of

Education idea turned down, and both southern municipalities pressed for a two-tier system of education.

"I am proud of the fact the Consultative Committee did such an excellent job," Halton Warden William Coultter of Campbellville said after the proposed change in legislation was announced. "To think the province is going to adopt the same idea shows we were on the right track all along."

But the Warden has serious

reservations about one part of the provincial plan. The county boards would set their own tax levy and collect it directly from the ratepayers. Warden Coultter felt this would be an added expense and would probably double the cost of the present tax collection system, where both school and administration levies are collected at once.

"I am not happy about this part at all," he said, "it should be dealt with a little more carefully."

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Old Stewarttown School bell preserved in Institute cairn

As a centennial project, the bell from the old Stewarttown School (S.S. 6 Esquesing) has been preserved and placed in a new cairn on the lawn of the consolidated school at Stewarttown.

A dedication service took place recently when the beautiful stone cairn and two plaques were dedicated and unveiled. The village W.I. and the family of Austin A. Corner participated in the service.

Mr. Corner's son-in-law

Harry MacMillan built the cairn. The plaques read "Designed and constructed in memory of Austin A. Corner, 1904 - 1966" and "Stewarttown School Bell, S.S. No. 6, 1873-1958, erected by the Esquesing Women's Institute to commemorate Canada's Centennial, 1967."

Mrs. Walter Lawson, a W.I. member and former teacher unveiled the cairn, assisted by Mrs. Harry Mac Millan, Mr. Corner's

daughter. Rev. Canon J.E. Maxwell was in charge of the dedication. Refreshments were served at St. John's Church hall, where several old photos of the school and its students were on display.

Split decorations anniversary cake

A double celebration - for a 25th wedding anniversary and 50th wedding anniversary - produced a uniquely decorated half-and-half cake.

Mr. and Mrs. Murdo McCutcheon of Acton and Mr. and Mrs. Harold Turner of North Bay, together celebrated their wedding anniversaries at a dinner party at the Casablanca restaurant, Burlington, Saturday evening. Mr. and Mrs. McCutcheon were 25 years wed and the Turners half a century. The couples are close friends.

After the dinner, friends and relatives gathered at the home of Mrs. Parkinson, a daughter of the Turners, in Burlington. Mr. and Mrs. Turner lived formerly in the Acton district and are presently visiting their family in the area.

Miss Muriel McCutcheon arranged for the unusual anniversary cake, its two halves decorated for the two couples. It was a complete surprise.

Friends came to call Sunday at the McCutcheon home to extend congratulations.

Library grant request at Esquesing meeting

Co-ordinating principal Eric Balkind told Esquesing School Board Wednesday, Nov. 8, the Milton Library wanted to know if the school board would make a grant to the library since Esquesing school children use the library.

Trustee W. Lawson felt the school board should not take the responsibility but that they should approach Esquesing council on the matter. "They should make the decision," he added.

Principal Balkind pointed out that many Esquesing children use all the town libraries, Georgetown, Milton and Acton.

Trustee Chester Early wondered if the Board should pay since some of the children were taken to the library during school hours.

"If out of town residents pay more for a library card, why should there have to be a grant," asked school board member Dr. A. Thompson.

Before approaching council the board decided to find out how many school children are using the various libraries. (Esquesing council, expressing varied opinion, decided to discuss the matter more fully and advise the school board of its decision.)

Mrs. A.M. Kachmar was hired to teach one of the primary grades at Glen Williams.

Don't throw away an old oilcloth tablecloth. Use pinkish shears to cut a number of place mats.



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