

Council approves drag



PETER BOWMAN, chief spokesman for residents who jammed Esqueusing Council chamber, Friday night to protest the establishment of the Golden Horseshoe Dragway was disappointed by council's decision to issue a building permit for a control tower for the dragway. Mr. Bowman has promised to pursue court action in an attempt to stop the dragway. "The battle is only beginning", he told reporters.—(Staff Photo)



CARL BRISTOW promoter of the Golden Horseshoe Dragway in Esqueusing township talks with reeve George Currie at Friday night's special meeting.—(Staff Photo)

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for the township, provoked laughter among members of the deputation.

Lawyer Robert Swayze spoke on behalf of opponents of the drag strip. He argued that the holding by-law took effect the day it was passed by council. The application for a building permit for the control tower was made after the passing of the by-law, Mr. Swayze contended.

Mr. Swayze also claimed that establishment of the drag strip would cause Mr. Bowman's property to devalue and would create noise, dust and pollution for other area residents.

On behalf of his clients, Mr. Swayze presented council a petition, signed by 200 residents of Esqueusing, Acton, Georgetown and Milton, opposing the dragway.

Twenty-five of the signees were from Acton, 17 from Georgetown and 6 from Milton, a fact that annoyed reeve Currie. "Now we don't run the town of Acton and I hope they don't try to run us", he said.

Mr. Swayze pointed out that the list was made as a result of an ad placed in local newspapers. "There isn't any use bringing a petition signed by people of Acton and Georgetown", the reeve said.

Mr. Swayze also accused Mr. Bristow of being very "secretive" about his plans for the land. The assessment, he predicted, would not compensate for the problems the strip would cause to the municipality.

He then asked council to defer issue of the building permit until the holding by-law has been heard by the Ontario Municipal Board.

In reply, Mr. Sopinka said it would be very unfair to have the matter adjourned until the zoning by-law is made effective. He also indicated his feelings about the petition.

"Any person who has any sense would sign it," he said, "it doesn't cost anything". Mr. Bristow admitted he was

appalled at claims that he had been very "secretive" about his intentions.

"The first inkling I got that somebody was interested in this, was from Mr. Bowman and quite frankly his attitude was so truculent, I wasn't inclined to tell him a thing", Mr. Bristow commented.

Mr. Bristow went on to point out the first inkling he got that council were interested, he was at a meeting with only five hours notice.

"When you applied for a building permit for a garage, was there any discussion about its use", Mr. Swayze wanted to know.

"The use of the building was put down as storage, which is exactly what it is", Mr. Bristow replied.

"No businessman goes around volunteering information unless he's asked", Mr. Sopinka contended.

An Eighth Line resident, Charles Hildebrandt asked that the matter be deferred until October 1 and submitted as unfinished business to the regional council reeve Currie has predicted will be in office by July 1. Mr. Hildebrandt, a former Georgetown councillor said he had learned from his experience on council that a building permit can be legally refused.

David Craig, a resident of the Fourth Line, questioned the location of the drag strip in terms of planning.

"If we allow this to go in what's going to happen to adjacent properties?", he wondered.

Deputy-reeve Tom Hill pointed out that Mr. Bristow had applied for the building permit for the tower, previously, but council had postponed a decision until he received approval from the Health Unit.

"There's no use beating around the bush, this is what it was for", deputy-reeve Hill confessed.

"I can't find anything in our

by-laws, stopping a drag strip in this township", the deputy-reeve added.

Councillor Ken Marshall explained that a good many people enjoy drag racing as a recreation.

"We have to think seriously of our moral obligation to the 9,000 others we represent", he said "Would we be right in depriving them of this form of recreation?" he wondered.

Another opponent of the drag strip, Mrs. G. Goldie asked council to consider the people who enjoy a quiet Sunday afternoon. She also pointed out that Mr. Marshall is trying to sell his property to race track promoters at the other end of the township.

Mr. Hildebrandt expressed the opinion that on account of conflicting interests, councillor

Marshall should not vote on the issue of the building permit, but clerk-treasurer Delmar French said he had contacted the township solicitor and had been informed that in no way, shape or form was there a conflict of interest involved.

Dick Howitt, another township resident asked if he could expect his assessment to go down, with the establishment of the dragway.

"I can assure you, whether this drag strip goes in or not, your assessment will go up", reeve Currie replied.

Councillor Miller did not agree with his colleagues.

"I don't think we should issue this permit", he said, "We'll have to amend our by-law to permit it".

The deputation greeted councillor Miller's statement

with applause and shouts of "run for reeve" and "you're the first man that's made sense tonight."

When councillor Leslie was asked his opinion, he replied, "Since Mr. Bristow bought the land before the by-law I think he can go right ahead with his drag strip".

Before asking council for a decision, reeve Currie told Mr. Bristow he thought he should have come to council first.

"However" he admitted, "You've outsmarted the township, I'll give you credit for that."

"You're dealing with somebody who's in the township once, what's to say he isn't going to try it again", Mr. Bowman warned council.

Finally, the reeve asked council if they had made up their minds.

"I've said my piece", answered deputy-reeve Hill, "Whether I've left my political career in the balance, I've said my piece".

The motion to approve issue of the permit was made by councillor Marshall and seconded by councillor Leslie.

Councillor Miller specifically asked that the vote be recorded.



GOLDEN HORSESHOE DRAGWAY promoter Carl Bristow, (left) and lawyer John Sopinka appeared jubilant, after Esqueusing Council voted to issue a building permit for a control tower for the dragway, at a special meeting of council Friday night.—(Staff Photo)



REEVE GEORGE CURRIE listened to several complaints about the establishment of the Golden Horseshoe Dragway, at Friday night's special meeting of Esqueusing Council. Here he listens to R. Schandelmoler, who owns property near the proposed dragway.—(Staff Photo)

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Jan. 26, 1970.

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somewhere to go on the weekends, not very far from home, yet it's just the kind of weekend I enjoy."

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We spend a fortune to go out of town to places like Pinecrest Speedway, Flamboro and other raceways. We need a place close to home.

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Give the young people of Acton the kind of recreation they will enjoy. It will make young Actonians very happy people. The old saying goes "The young people of today are the citizens of tomorrow."

Let's see some enthusiasm and support the drag strip.

Bob Smith.

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P.S. How about a new column for the Acton Free Press, "Down at the Drags."

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Information Required — Sex, Colour, Breed and Age of dog.
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