

Many problems but few answers revealed at Chamber survey forum

Surprising and depressing answers to the Chamber of Commerce shopping survey prompted the group to mail out 120 invitations to a public meeting Tuesday to discuss the problem—but just five merchants, a few Chamber members and reporters turned up, totalling 13.

However, after puzzling over the responses to the questionnaires, the Chamber members agreed to set up a "task force" to study parking problems, and a phone survey will be taken to assess the desire for increased calling area.

Chamber president John Shadbolt presided for the meeting in the library and explained the survey sheets showed the opinion of 25 per cent of Actonians. About 50 per cent of the town had received survey forms, and about half of these had been filled out and turned in. The Chamber felt it was a good cross-section.

Overall rating of the Acton shopping area showed 30 per cent rated it good, 55 per cent average and 13 per cent poor.

59 per cent lived less than a mile from shopping and 55 per cent shop here occasionally, 43 per cent usually and 2 per cent seldom.

32 per cent of shoppers go by foot, 55 by car and 13 by public transportation.

A surprise to the chamber was the figure of 67 per cent who rated the shopping hours as poor. Just 25 per cent felt shopping hours were average and 7 per cent good.

Merchants present wondered the reasons. They agreed they would soon stay open Mondays and evenings if there was enough business to make it pay. They felt there was not, judging by slow business during Christmas longer open hours.

A recent newcomer to the area, John Secord felt Acton should be adjusting already to the coming "boom". He favored open Mondays.

Discussion revealed neighboring towns the same as Acton, with many Guelph stores closing at 5.30—earlier than Acton's 6 p.m.

Paul Nielsen thinks Thursday open nights should be considered.

One of the almost-unanimous reports came in the answer to the question about after sale service—warranty, repairs etc. 92 per cent felt service was poor; just 7 per cent average and 1 per cent good.

Selection in stores brought results: good 10 per cent, average 59 per cent, poor 31 per cent; prices good 24, average 53, poor 23 per cent.

Entertainment: good 16, average 61, poor 23 per cent.

Rest rooms good 3, average 24, poor 73 per cent.

Eating places good 2, average 12, poor 86 per cent.

Knowledge of sales people good 43 per cent, average 41 per cent, poor 16 per cent; attitude good 35 per cent, average 41 per cent, poor 24 per cent; handling complaints good 47, average 39, poor 14 per cent; telephone manners good 10, average 48, poor 42 per cent.

Prices good 24, average 53, poor 23 per cent.

Parking good 5, average 14, poor 81 per cent.

Dave Manes said he could not understand how the banks were not assessed to help provide parking.

Sheets were distributed listing the recommendations of council's parking authority for improved driving and parking. (Chamber representatives had attended a special meeting and some of this discussion was reviewed, including merchants' willingness to co-operate and even contribute personally.)

Fifty-six per cent said they'd like to see Mill St. turned into a pedestrian mall, with 44 per cent not in favor. A previous attempt to try the idea had fallen through, merchants reviewed glumly.

Some of the merchants should probably take a long, hard look at some of these figures, the chairman commented.

Paul Nielsen commented few Chambers allow results of such surveys to be made public. Those present agreed some of the answers were very hard to understand.

Bell telephone district manager Lloyd Denby was present when Roy Goodwin explained his hopes that all, nearly 3,000, numbers in this area could be phoned to ask about extended coverage.

Mail survey would cost \$350 which the Chamber does not have, and returns would not be high, he felt.

There are presently 2,870 numbers beginning with 853. Acton now has access to 13,658 phones without long distance changes, including Rockwood's 1,215 and Georgetown's 13,658.

Extended calling area would include Milton with 6,126; Guelph with 35,213 and Campbellville with 800 phones.

Increase in rates, Mr. Goodwin stated, would be \$4.60 a month for an individual business phone, to \$13.70; and 90 cents a month for a private residential phone, from \$4.40 to \$5.30.

Mr. Goodwin had all the rates listed, presently and with the possible larger area.

Mr. Denby explained that if Acton requested the larger calling area it would be a minimum of three years before it could be implemented, and perhaps five years.

The extension was offered in 1962 and 1963 and was turned down by the town.

The Chamber of Commerce will take this as a project to see if the people want it, Mr. Goodwin said.

Mr. Goodwin said he was personally in favor. Mr. Denby agreed many more calls are made when extended area is introduced.

Asked about Bell's revenue, he said it would take years to cover the costs involved in creating the larger calling area.

Mr. Shadbolt wondered about the possibility of an emergency number. Mr. Denby explained the Bell provides the equipment but the problem of manning the number remains. Mr. Shadbolt wondered if the Chamber couldn't consider the possibility of providing an emergency number service.

The survey rated Bell service: cost high 55, average 29, low 16; service good 62, average 28, poor 10 per cent. A slight majority favored expanded service to Guelph and Milton but not Toronto.

79 per cent favored an emergency number, 32 per cent said they would use a GO train. 51 per cent said they would participate in an adult education program.

Permit application error slip of typewriter-Hill

"It looks like you've had the wool pulled over your eyes again," drag strip opponent Peter Bowman told Esquiesing Council Monday night, as he showed them a copy of the building permit application for the Golden Horseshoe Dragway's control tower.

A section of the application read, "A further condition being that the installation of septic tanks and drainage tile shall be in accordance with the specifications of the Peel County Health Unit."

Mr. Bowman claimed the application was invalid because it referred to the Peel County Health Unit instead of the Halton Unit.

"That's a slip of the typewriter, that's all", deputy-reeve Tom Hill assured Mr. Bowman.

Assistant clerk K. C. Lindsay explained that application forms had been sent out from the new regional assessment office in

Brampton. Mr. Bowman is continuing his fight to have construction on the dragway halted and is inviting financial support.

Sympathizers held a meeting Saturday and Mr. Bowman reports excellent response.

Many report empty houses

No accidents in town were reported to police the past week. An impaired driver was charged, a theft was reported and there was a liquor seizure, among occurrences investigated.

A passer-by reported the door unlocked at the brewers' retail store during closed hours.

Due to the recent break-ins quite a few people are informing the police when they will be away from home. "Keep it up", say the police.

CORRECTION

PLEASE NOTE!

RE
SIMPSONS-SEARS ADVERTISEMENT

PAGE D-8 THIS ISSUE
501 NYLON BROADLOOM
SHOULD READ

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This Suite highlights a 7-drawer Double Dresser, 4-Drawer Chest and 4'6" Panel Bed

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Choose the style that suits your decor

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The 36" x 48" Walnut, arborite topped table extends to 50" Hi-Back Chairs Phenol Finish

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This suite features a high back, Foam Cushions and Walnut trim on Arms.

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39" CONTINENTAL BED

Tailored in quilted floral damask over layers of sisal and felt for comfort and durability.

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HAND MADE - NYLON FLOOR MATS

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Esquiesing looks favorably on Board's request for aid

A request for financial aid to Acton's parks and recreation program, submitted by Board of Parks' Management and Recreation Committee chairman Peter Marks received favorable response at Monday night's regular meeting of Esquiesing Council.

The chairman appeared at the meeting to follow up a letter the board sent the township council. Mr. Marks explained the board felt a request for financial aid from Esquiesing was in order since such a large percentage of township residents use parks and recreation facilities in Acton at no extra charge.

After all revenue from the parks and recreation program is collected, the board still has to go to Acton ratepayers for three or four mills (approximately \$20,000), Mr. Marks added.

Mr. Marks went on to point out that the board also subsidizes many Esquiesing residents through minor sports programs and said he hoped council would look on the matter "as a slight moral obligation".

"I happen to know you couldn't get a good hockey team without players from Esquiesing!" reeve George Currie informed Mr. Marks, jokingly.

Reaction from other members of council to Mr. Marks' request was favorable.

"I go along with you 100%", deputy-reeve Tom Hill commented.

The deputy-reeve thought council should definitely consider it at budget time.

"I agree", councillor Ken Marshall added. "We ought to be trying to arrange something with Milton and Georgetown, too. We're not a farmer's township, anymore."

Councillor Russell Miller's comment: "This is something that is long overdue".

Deputy-reeve Hill also stressed public relations among municipalities is important.

Mr. Marks said the board would welcome any thoughts or comments on their program from Esquiesing residents and mentioned the possibility of allowing council a representative on the board. Council agreed to take a further look at the request, at budget time.

Licence plates being sold for historic vehicles

Last spring, Ontario began issuing licence plates for historic motor vehicles other than commercial motor vehicles. Now the older commercial motor vehicles (trucks, truck tractors, fire apparatus, buses, ambulances, etc.) will qualify for registration as historic vehicles also.

Historic vehicles must be at least 30 years old and must be substantially unchanged or unmodified from the original manufacturer's product. They can only be operated on a highway for the purposes of exhibition, tours or similar functions organized by properly constituted automobile clubs, or for the purpose of parades, repair, testing or demonstration for sale.

Licence fee is \$10 a year for historic motor vehicles. The licence plates are marked to identify this class of vehicle and to indicate limited highway use.

MELTED CHOCOLATE is poured into mould by Blanche Glendinning. See feature story on candy factory in today's big Free Press. (Staff photo)