

Plan caters to affluence

The draft plan of the Guelph and Suburban Planning Area released last week contained no surprises. Planners want to retain the rural atmosphere of the townships and restrict urban growth to existing villages and hamlets.

Policies fall in line with the proposals of the Toronto-Centred Region master plan which was drawn up by provincial government planners, who decided the prime agricultural land in this area should be protected from exploitation by developers, and land not suited for agriculture could be used for recreation.

Most of the provisions in the draft plan were logical and in our estimation reflect the wishes of the great majority of people in both Erin and Eramosa townships, but there are areas which tend to be exclusive and bind farmers up too tightly with red tape.

For example, the plan would limit the creation of lots in rural areas for new urban dwellings to 50 over the four townships involved. This is broken down to 20 for Erin and six for Eramosa township, 10 per year in Guelph township and 35-40 in Puslinch township.

Although the plan does not aim to create a new country aristocracy it is provisions such as this one which will soon manage the job. Limited

residential growth of this scale will lead to prohibitive prices for land. The average person will no longer be able to afford a country home. Wealth and prestige will take over. The countryside as we know it will no longer be the same.

In our estimation, this would be the other end of the development stick. We would not have the sprawling dormitories everyone decries but the affluent would soon have complete control.

How can we overcome such stringent regulations without losing control of very valuable agricultural land? It is a problem for planners but we believe there are many areas of land in all the townships concerned which are unsuitable for either agriculture or recreation but would make ideal homesites. Why not use these areas on a limited scale instead of letting them lie fallow?

When we speak of tight control we are reminded of the difficulties residents of various townships are experiencing now over small problems such as building a garage. Farmers are protected under agricultural provisions in zoning by-laws but how long will this provision last?

The absurdity of some planning regulations was demonstrated in Eramosa township recently when people were barred from erecting a

garage to house a truck. Apparently the regulations allow an unsightly truck to be parked anywhere but it is illegal to hide it from view in a garage, because the owner makes his living with the vehicle. From an aesthetic viewpoint, we would prefer the garage to the truck any day of the year.

Planners who envision a rural Utopia composed of large houses neatly enclosed with trimmed hedges, white fences and harmonious out-buildings, are not being practical. We can see nothing wrong with a person or family using their own property to operate a business in rural areas provided they do it with taste and discretion. We believe the regulations should have more stress on provisions to control natural growth rather than sapping the initiative of rural people.

These are points to ponder before the draft of the official plan is final and policies implemented. Township planners don't pretend to have all the answers for the future. Residents should forward their own suggestions and comments on the plan to the clerk of their township. It is in their best interests to do so.

Meanwhile, we think the various planning boards should be congratulated for the time and effort they have put into producing a plan which in the whole reflects the thinking of their areas.

Free Press Editorial Page

B2 The Acton Free Press, Wednesday, January 24, 1973

SOME OF THE BEST ice conditions in years attracted hundreds of skaters to Fairy Lake on the weekend. The 88 acres of ice had few areas where someone had not cut a pattern, tried a piroquette or landed on buttocks. Monday the weather turned mild and the giant ice rink was again flooded with water.

—H. Coles Photo

Mini-Comment . . .

One reader, Wes Brown of Acton, dropped in with a magnet and clipping which had a recipe for curing leg cramps. Wes says he has found that taking a magnet to bed and putting it over the afflicted spot cured many a leg cramp for him. The clipping showed that a pediatrician from the Hospital for Sick Children agreed one hundred per cent. Troubled by leg cramps for years, she now says, "Whenever I feel a cramp coming, I just move my leg over the magnet and by the time I count five, I'm asleep." Sounds crazy but it works. It seems to us taking a magnet to bed would be far less bother than taking all your troubles with you. Unless it is your wife, of course.

Ordinarily we don't plug things in this column but this week we are asking readers to take a serious look at the centennial commission's "buy a brick" campaign for an arena wall of fame. It is one way of letting your name stand for posterity at very little cost and aiding the centennial campaign as well. Names will be inscribed on the bricks which go into the wall on small plaques. It should be quite a wall when it is finished.

Old Man Winter gave us a January pause last week when warm chinook-like winds turned everyone's thoughts to Spring; ice melted, roads regained some of their flatness and

puddles were everywhere. No doubt by now, winter has regained its icy grip and our teeth are chattering again.

The prodigious amounts of sand which have had to be dumped on town streets to make them passable for pedestrians and motorists unfortunately will again have to be swept up in the spring. Roads usually are swept but sidewalks often suffer from lack of attention. It would be an excellent project if council could initiate a clean-up week in which residents and town employees could cooperate and have this old burgh gleaming when the trees put on their spring coats.

Tear down order most peculiar

The generosity Esqueving Council has shown in allowing Joseph Bonnano, Lot 7, Con. 9, to wait until the summer, before tearing down a garage he has partially constructed can cover up neither the peculiar way in which Mr. Bonnano's case has been handled nor the incumbency upon council to offer this man better compensation.

Although it is true the present location of the garage, approximately five feet from the township road, is in contravention of the municipality's building by-law, it must also be remembered Mr. Bonnano was issued a building permit in good faith and that the site was not at first inspected by the township building inspector.

Only after Mr. Bonnano had

completed most of the building and used up most of his money did one ratepayer complain and the building inspector arrive on the scene.

At a November 20 council meeting, clerk-treasurer Delmar French admitted there had been a mistake in the township offices in issue of the permit and Reeve Tom Hill criticized building inspector Tom McLean for not visiting the site earlier.

Subsequently, members of council visited the site and found Mr. Bonnano had not constructed the garage on the exact spot plans showed it would be located. It was also discovered Mr. Bonnano had been looking at his plans upside down, when he presented them.

If he was guilty of misinterpreting the plans, the same must be said of

those who issued the building permit. In spite of mistakes, council ordered Mr. Bonnano to tear down and relocate the garage in a December vote, opposed only by retiring Deputy-Reeve Russell Miller, who maintained the fault lay with the township.

Following a final plea before council last week, Mr. Bonnano was refused manual help to tear down the building. Instead Reeve Hill suggested he could be excused from the tear-down order, until warmer weather arrives.

Council may be trying to repent for their sins by offering Mr. Bonnano a stay of execution. What they should be asking is "What would their decision have been if the building had been a residence or barn?"

Let's have stand-up decisions

Recently Acton councillor Norman Elliott completed an excellent job of rearranging the town's council chamber to expedite business more efficiently. Chairs are arranged in a semi-circle facing a dais, where the mayor or committee chairman presides.

Similar set-ups are being used at all municipal councils in the district. They reflect the thought that all municipal

business must be done sitting down.

After countless hours of sitting down along with councils, squirming and fidgeting when the hours get long and dawn gets closer, we wonder where the idea originated.

Why must all discussions and decisions be made sitting down?

We are putting our vote in for a stand-up milk bar at all council chambers. Issues could then be

discussed standing when sitting becomes tedious. We submit decisions would have as much thought and more despatch as the hour gets late.

Since only milk would be served the inclination to linger at the bar would not interrupt the meeting's continuity. Certainly it could lessen the tendency for municipal officials to become broad at the beam.

Are you listening out there?



Bill Smiley

the state with their bodies, such as soldiers. Next are those who serve the state with their minds—politicians, lawyers, officeholders—but not with their consciences. Finally there are the very few—martyrs, reformers, patriots in the real sense—who serve it with their consciences also, and are commonly treated as enemies by it.

The trigger for Thoreau's essay was his strong disapproval of the American government of his day on two issues, the Mexican War and slavery. The Mexican War was one of flagrant aggression in which the Americans moved in and conquered vast territories in the southwest.

(It has always been a source of pleasure to me, when Americans decry British "colonialism" to remind them of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, the Philippines, Panama and Texas. They have conveniently forgotten, in most cases, that many of these "acquisitions" were a result of direct and violent conquest.)

Thoreau spoke openly of revolution. "When a sixth of the population of a nation which has undertaken to be the refuge of liberty are slaves, and a whole country (Texas) is unjustly overrun and conquered by a foreign army (U.S.), I think it is not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionize."

Isn't the situation almost exactly the same today? Blacks are not legal slaves, but they are economic ones. North Viet Nam was not exactly overrun, but not for want of trying.

And what would happen to Thoreau if he expressed such sentiments today? Probably not much, because there is a growing, swelling anger against the stupid war among Americans of all walks of life.

But if he'd said it ten years ago? Or in the era of Joe McCarthy? He'd likely have lost his job, been harassed by the CIA and/or

the FBI, attacked by some segments of the press, and generally driven like a fox before hounds.

It speaks much for the growing lack of freedom in the U.S. (and elsewhere) that nothing serious happened to Thoreau at all, when he uttered these inflammatory remarks.

He did spend one night in jail, when he refused to pay his poll tax, on the basis that his dollar might buy either a man or a musket to shoot one with. But somebody paid his fine, and he was released.

Today we have the prospect of men spending years in jail because they refuse to go against their consciences. We have thousands of U.S. draft-dodgers in Canada, forsaking their home and native land for reasons of common sense (who wants to be killed?) or conscience.

Joan Baez, the folk-singer and anti-war individual, tried to take a similar stand by refusing to pay her income tax. The government merely deducted it at source, from the record companies who paid her royalties.

Thoreau advocated that, if there were an unjust law, we should break it. What do you think?

What would happen to an ordinary Canadian who said, "I will pay to have my garbage collected and the streets repaired. But I will not pay one penny for 'national defence'." I don't want welfare, unemployment insurance, medicare so I won't pay a nickel toward them."

The answer is obvious. That bold Canadian would spend the rest of his life in the law courts, being punished by "his" government, instead of being allowed the simple, sensible alternative of opting out.

Life is too short. But are we being governed to death? Oh, for a few Thoreaus in these timid days!

Back Issues of The Free Press

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, January 29, 1953

The Y.M.C.A.'s first boxing show was held in the Y gymnasium with an attendance of 75 fans rooting for their favorites. Gold and silver cups were presented Saturday afternoon at the Roxy theatre by Forman Lawrence and Y secretary Bob Redfern to Bill Churchill, Teddy Moyle, Andy Williams, Brian McCristall, Kenny Redfern, Gary Dawkins, Bill Dawkins, Peter Newton, Don Lindsay, Richard Massey and Bill McCoy. Boxing instructor is Don Clayton. Assisting at the boxing show were Crawford Douglas, Cliff Sutton, Judges Jack Greer, Jock Calder and Mansell Nellis; seconds Orme Hunt and Elmer Smith, tickets Sheila Paul and Mary Magas at the snack bar.

Mr. Peter Smith is celebrating her 92nd birthday. If a railway strike is called for the Monday morning deadlines at least 10 local employees will be out of work, 20 trains a day will not pass through Acton, mail will be cut to first class only and delays will include the prompt delivery of medical supplies from Baxter Labs.

Mac Sprowl was elected president of Acton Fall Fair at the annual meeting held Saturday, succeeding George Wallace. Gordon Leslie is 1st vice-president and Ray Everdell second vice-president. At 25 years Mac Sprowl is the youngest president of the fair.

Acton Citizens' Band held their election with Tommy Nicol president, Bing Ramsden vice-president, Tom Ware Treasurer, Elmer Smith secretary, committee Rudolph Spielvogel, Ted Tyler, Charles Mason, Lawrence Weick.

Mrs. C. Leishman was hostess for Knox Evening Auxiliary. Mrs. A. J. Buchanan of the Senior W.M.S. introduced the study on Africa, taking members back to their school days with the use of maps and questions.

G. A. and Jim Dills took over the Neighbourly News broadcast on the radio Sunday morning.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, January 17, 1923.

Messrs. W. J. Reid and J. A. Smith were appointed by council to equalize the 1923 assessment. Mr. Smith's fee was set at \$80.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, January 27, 1898

John Nickell of Lot 22, Con. 4, Esqueving, died last Thursday at the home of his son, Mr. J. R. Nickell of Nassagaweya. Until a couple of weeks ago he helped with the work on the farm but he contracted pneumonia and died at the good old age of 77.

John Nickell Sr., father of the deceased, emigrated from the county Antrim, Ireland in 1819 and secured the homestead. He built a log cabin at the rear of the property and his descendants tell the story that he had for the rear of his first residence a cut of one of the immense pine trees which then abounded there. It was here that his first son was born and careful investigation proved

John Nickell was the first male child born in the township of Esqueving. He was never further from home than Toronto; he visited that city only once and he was 65 before he took the trip.

Mr. Dan Mann, one of Acton's most prosperous sons, and William McKenzie have been at Ottawa on business with the government. One report has it they have been endeavoring to make arrangements for the construction of the line from Telegraph Creek to Teslin Lake. On the other hand it has been said their mission is in connection with the construction of a section of the Vancouver, Victoria and Eastern Railway. They have made heavy investments in western Canada.

Tuesday afternoon John Dickieson and his mother were thrown from their cutter at the C.T.R. station at Rockwood. The horse had become frightened at a passing train and Mr. Dickieson was thrown in front of the train and had his arm cut off. He later died. The mother was not much hurt. The coroner's jury exonerated the trainmen.

Rev. Father Haley has been transferred to Macton.

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Business and Editorial Office



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