

Paul Nielsen:

Civic pride, solidarity needed

Provision of off-street parking in downtown Acton has been talked about by Acton merchants for years, and the latest proposal - to purchase the Hotchen Bakery property - is well known by all downtown merchants, says Chamber of Commerce retail section president Paul Nielsen this week.

While he was away in Denmark, third reading of the by-law to make a conditional offer to purchase was held up when merchant Bert Hinton attended the council meeting. The matter has now been referred by council's finance committee to the town parking authority. This group will likely make the next proposal to the finance committee, which would go from there to council.

Bert Hinton and Bill Yundt told councillors there should be more input and more information provided.

How about the inference of poor communications?

This week Paul Nielsen told the Free Press that merchants were asked to public

meetings Oct. 9 and Dec. 17. Presentations were subsequently made to council. Need for parking and downtown improvements has been discussed for years. Lately, a statement of willingness to support parking financially has circulated.

This position stated merchants should take the initiative, as they would be the immediate benefactors. It suggested an increased mill rate of 20 mills on commercial and business assessment, to cover the cost of acquiring properties for off-street parking. (Hotchens was not specifically named.) Various people undertook to circulate these sheets.

How many people have signed they are willing to pay for off-street parking?

Paul Nielsen says 53 merchants or owners have been contacted and of these, 41 have signed.

Some out-of-town owners have not yet been contacted.

How should parking be paid for?

Paul Nielsen is convinced council would not approve its

coming out of general funds. Neither Acton or Georgetown councils have ever purchased properties to provide parking.

He has copies of provincial bylaws which set up parking authorities. Methods of financing renewal and upgrading, and providing parking are set out.

Assessing of merchants is a standard way of paying for the lot.

In my opinion we should go further than just off-street parking, this should be a link in a chain of events to upgrade the area, he thinks.

What about the two hour parking ban?

Paul thinks a one hour limit on the front streets and two on the back streets might be best.

Is more parking needed? Paul Nielsen is convinced it is. Anyone depending on the Billion Report (which was admittedly faulty) would find there are 131 fewer parking spaces now, than indicated in 1974. Some angle parking has been replaced by parallel parking, spots have been lost

on Willow, John and St. Alban's Drive. Restrictions and changes made the situation even worse.

"This is all taking place at a time when many businesses are showing an increase of about 100 per cent or more, with the town's burgeoning populations.

Now, Acton has about 7,000 people. Projected growth for this year is 12 1/2 per cent and the same 12 1/2 per cent figure is estimated for the following year. This means Acton could have 50 per cent growth in the urban trade area in the next three years. The trade area could grow by 20 per cent.

"We have to make it as convenient as possible for people to shop here."

There is definitely a trend back to shopping in downtown areas. Merchants all over Ontario are aware of this. But it requires a certain civic pride and community responsibility on the part of the merchants, Paul insists. There must also be solidarity if merchants want to keep their central district alive.

On cable T.V.

Former M.P. host



RUD WHITING shows the style and interest in Postmaster and Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs Bryce Mackasey, he will display as talk show host on a Halton Cable T.V. program to be aired in October.

Rud Whiting, former Liberal M.P. for Halton, may become the Johnny Carson of Halton Cable T.V.

Rud, who served as M.P. from 1968 to 1972, will introduce a local talk show sometime in October. The personable 45 year old is Marketing Manager for Hestop Industries.

He admits he has no previous "show biz" experience, but commented, "I've been in politics and they're pretty close."

He is on the look-out for interesting guests, and will not confine himself to political guests. He says, however, an October starting date will be right before the election campaigning starts for municipal council, so will welcome any candidate on the show.

Acton, Milton and Georgetown people will be included since the show will be carried on the local channel as community programming.

While most of the shows will be from the studio, Rud intends to go out to do shows, and may even have a phone-

If TTC strikes GO bus stops

Over 700 district commuters who take GO buses to and from Georgetown to Toronto each day could find themselves forced to find alternative transportation if the threatened Toronto Transit Strike materializes.

GO Transit spokesman Joe Desjardins said this week if the TTC drivers go out on strike, GO Buses will be shut down, too, since the system is operated by Gray Coach Lines, a wholly owned subsidiary of the TTC.

About 260 people ride to and from Metro Toronto each day on the Georgetown-York Mills GO bus route. Another 450 ride the Guelph, Rockwood, Acton, Georgetown buses to downtown Toronto every day.

"It appears there is a good possibility of a TTC strike but GO is the same situation as everyone else. We are just waiting to see what happens in program."

No definite schedule has been established, but half an hour once a week is being considered.

Georgetown GO Trains would continue to carry passengers to and from Toronto on four trains morning and afternoon and predicted extra cars would be added to the trains if a strike hails the GO buses serving Georgetown.

"We have 111 cars and will have to disperse them on the Lakeshore and Georgetown train lines where the demand is for them. We will just have to play things by ear for the first few days of a strike," he said.

Over 30 parents

Organizer Lonnie Harkins has sent away over 30 application forms for Block Parents. It takes several weeks for them to be processed.

She is encouraged by the response and expects even more applications in school time draws near.

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