

Hotchen parking lot tossed to committee

The town should buy the Hotchen's property and Civic property and lease the Y property to ease the parking problem in downtown Acton, councillor Peter Marks proposed Tuesday night in a three-page motion at Halton Hills planning board.

According to the motion which was tabled and never voted on, all Acton residents would pay 60 per cent of the estimated \$70,000 cost through their taxes and the commercial area would pay 40 per cent. The \$70,000 total would include purchase of the Hotchen property at a cost limit of \$45,000, the Civic property at a limit of \$10,000, a lease with the Y at \$100 a year and construction of parking lot facilities at \$15,000.

The idea suggested by Mr. Marks would result in a parking lot with an entrance from Willow St. and exit on John. Planning board members praised Mr. Marks' efforts but decided only to table the motion and turn it over as a basis for discussion to a special committee on Acton's downtown parking. A special committee of council is to be established for this purpose.

The 40 per cent share according to Marks would be paid by businesses located in the six major benefitting blocks but owners already providing the number of spaces required by by-law would be exempt.

Mr. Marks contended money received from the sale of the old town works yard could go toward the 60 per cent paid by all the residents. Earlier planner Mario Venti outlined a plan to assess only business owners in the downtown core and said costs to the individual owners would be fairly high since only realty tax can be used and the assessment total is only \$584,000.

Councillor Pete Pomeroy predicted there would be no agreement among the busi-

ness people and said it was a lot of money for each owner to pay. (Councillors had lists of amounts individual business owners would pay.)

Mr. Pomeroy insisted the town was under no obligation to buy the Hotchen land and commented "The people who bought it did it with their eyes open." He claimed it would be a waste of time to draw up a bylaw since the figures were too high. He said the benefitting area might be enlarged to cover the whole of Acton so everybody would share the cost. "But if I had a business on the outskirts of Acton I wouldn't want to pay to attract people downtown."

Councillor Marilyn Serjeantson claimed all the shoppers in Acton would benefit and the cost would be minimal if spread over all the taxpayers.

The planners guessed it would cost each tax bill by \$3. The need is there, said councillor Pat McKenzie, but "who pays?" He recalled in 1952 when the first planning report urged offstreet parking there were no funds available. He suggested some of the money could come from the sale of the old water tower and the remainder be paid by everyone in ward one. "Off-street parking benefits everyone. In addition when stores are fixed up the business assessment goes up. It's obvious if the whole cost is levied against the B.I.A. it won't be acceptable."

Councillor George Malby compared the town opposing petitions pointing out the opposing one is signed by landowners and tenants while the other is signed by people saying all the people in Acton want their house taxes to go up to pay for off-street parking.

Councillor Roy Booth agreed the petition favoring parking had signatures of people who neither owned land in the area nor in some

cases even lived in Acton. Councillor Pat Patterson commented "I don't see how you can tax people to shop in Acton. The merchants have to draw people."

Looking back over the years councillor Les Duby admitted studies on parking had been done but said the town just couldn't afford to buy the land. "If regional government hadn't come we would be faced with it alone in Acton today." He praised council for good intentions when they became involved in the Hotchen property but said when the opposition arose council could not find a way to proceed. He stressed people on fixed incomes could not afford to have taxes increased to pay for parking. It would be most unfair and a cop out. He urged council to keep trying for a solution and put forward a motion saying council would keep trying to find an acceptable solution.

Councillor Walter Biehn maintained too much council time and staff hours had already been wasted on the subject. He pointed out no merchants had opposed Mrs. Shoemaker's petition and they were the people who would pay.

Mr. Duby's motion was defeated and Mr. Marks' lengthy motion introduced. Despite praise of Mr. Marks' efforts to solve the problem planning board voted to table the motion and asked the mayor to set up the special committee.

Mr. Pomeroy said he was wary of legal ramifications and Mr. Armstrong urged the idea not be lost but handled by the committee.

"That's like motherhood and apple pie, when you say let's form another committee," Mr. Marks commented. He suggested wryly he didn't want to see the wheel reinvented but just wanted to make sure his recommendation would be taken seriously.



MRS. MARGARET Buchanan of Maple View Lodge Rest Home celebrated her 97th birthday on September 7. Residents of the Lodge had a small party complete with birthday cake for her, and there was a family get together on Friday in her honor.

Who gets memorial maintenance money?

Trinity United Church would like some money for maintaining the Acton War Memorial.

Ralph Denny told Halton Hills works committee Monday that back in 1922 the Village of Acton invested \$223.15 and the interest was to pay for maintenance of the War Memorial. He suggested the accumulated interest should be turned over to the church since their custodian has been keeping everything neat and tidy at the memorial.

"It was before my time," joked councillor Les Duby. Councillor Pat McKenzie said there is a bond and the interest hasn't been picked up for some time. He said at one time the Legion used to get the interest but no coupons have been cashed in for years.

He noted the War Memorial has been maintained just as if it belonged to the church and the land around the monument is well taken care of. The committee will ask deputy treasurer Grant Usher to report on the status of the maintenance fund.

Police nab car thieves

Halton Regional Police Superintendent Floyd Schwartz confirmed Tuesday that police made arrests last week in connection with several summer car thefts in Acton and two local break and enters.

Fire rips through car

Fire chief Mick Holmes estimates \$1000 in damages to a 1970 Volkswagen after fire ripped through the interior on September 10.

Volunteer firefighters were called to the car fire at 11:45 p.m. at the 17 Sideroad, west of Hwy. 25. Mr. Holmes said the fire was caused by a malfunction in the gas heater. The car is owned by Fred Cole, 17 Wallace Ave.

Merchants weigh bid peddle town by radio

Good words about Acton may ripple daily from a Guelph radio station if a suggestion to the Business Association is followed through.

Radio station CJOY put together four 30-second rough plugs for the town, at the request of the association's advertising and promotion committee chairman Wayne Ruse. Tape recordings of the commercial were aired in Wednesday's meeting in the Firehall.

The proposal calls for a morning and dinner time airing to make people aware of downtown Acton. Mr. Ruse told the group. The morning broadcast would accompany the school bus report; the late afternoon one would include traffic conditions.

The package would be aired starting in December and ending in March. Total cost is \$2,410.60 which works out to a maximum of \$60 per person if 40 merchants go for the idea, Mr. Ruse said.

Excerpts from the rough copies include themes such as thanking residents for patience during reconstruction; there are great plans for Acton; these plans include the residents.

Eighty percent of the shopping population has children on school buses, Mr. Ruse said.

Seven of the eight merchants sitting around the table said they were willing to kick in the \$60 each.

The head of the Business Improvement Area (BIA)

Henry Stachyra has heard the commercials, Mr. Ruse said. He said he was sure the BIA would be involved with the broadcasts somehow. "It fits what they're doing", Mr. Ruse said.

John Coniglio voiced the only opposition to the idea. He told the meeting he would rather see efforts to fix up the downtown before any promotion is made. "I want to see Acton 70 to 75 per cent finished, then promote", he said.

"Rome was not built in a day", Grace Robertson told Mr. Coniglio.

Toronto Dominion Bank manager John Bumstead asked Mr. Coniglio if he was open during the Back to Acton Days promotion in July. Had Mr. Coniglio noticed any dif-

ference in how people shop that weekend?

"So what! I made a few hundred dollars more. So what!" Mr. Coniglio replied. He said it wasn't much return for the effort.

The rest of the merchants agreed to canvass their blocks and report to Mr. Ruse.

Merchants wagon gear?

Town merchants may harness together to draw an antique flower decked wagon in the Fall Fair parade Saturday.

The idea of decorating the wagon in the theme of "Pulling together for a better Acton tomorrow" was discussed during the Business Association meeting Wednesday in the Firehall.

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Plans in works for Back to Acton Days Fair

The Business Association took the first steps towards a second edition of Back to Acton Days, during a regular

Fair . . .

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Sunday with the English and Western horse shows and heavy horse pull. The tractor pull, jointly run by the fair board and the Junior Farmers already has 15 entries, Mr. Nelles said. This begins at 3 p.m.

Sunday also sees the Old Tyne Fiddlers Contest, with \$600 in prize money, plus a trophy.

The Happy Land Midway will be running the three days of the show to delight the more adventurous souls. For the less adventurous, there is always the merry-go-round. While the young and old alike are making plans to attend this year's fair, and numerous last minute details for organizers are being finished, plans are already in the offing for next year's fair, Mr. Nelles said.

association meeting last Wednesday.

The association's target is ten months from now, on the next July 1 long-weekend.

Advertising and Promotion committee chairman Wayne Ruse said the committee will be thinking about what it needs and ideas to present to the next meeting. A steering committee may also be set up to handle July 1 alone.

Mr. Ruse reminded the association he proposed getting started with plans during the summer. However he said, the response was nil. Consensus was made on asking town clubs and groups to help, however Ed Wood

said he was leary about possible pressure to move the site of celebrations away from the downtown. Art Cooper agreed on keeping the concept and expanding it.

During the first Back to Acton Days, the Business Improvement Area was heavily involved, Mr. Ruse said. The Chamber of Commerce was also interested, Mr. Ruse said. The Chamber of Commerce contact between it and the association didn't tell the chamber of plans for Back to Acton Days, Mr. Ruse said. He and chamber head Louis Charlebois sorted out the matter, he said.

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