

Georgetown library's future is now in OMB hands

After a three day hearing on the spending of \$750,000 for a new library at Cedarvale Park, Georgetown, Ontario Municipal Board Members J.A. Wheeler and C.G. Charron reserved their decision Friday afternoon.

They heard the cost of the 16,000 square foot building at Cedarvale estimated at \$750,000, compared to the 14,648 square foot expanded existing building at approximately \$600,000.

Town solicitor Ray Steele argued the town could well afford the \$750,000, as Treasurer Ray King had testified the per capita debt in Halton Hills is the lowest in Halton Region.

Alan Zeegen, a consulting engineer testified repairs at the Church Street site would total \$127,000, and claimed there are serious deficiencies in the floor structure. He said a library must sustain a load of 150 pounds per square foot,

and said the present floor is overstressed. He said the roof needed repairs, and there were deficiencies in fire safety requirements. He said the mechanical system needed to be replaced.

Bert Arnold, solicitor appearing for Betty Fisher and John Ferguson opposing the \$750,000 expenditure at Cedarvale, asked if reading rooms and washrooms, demanded the 150 pound per square foot load capacity as did the stacks.

Zeegen said the building code required that amount. Arnold pointed out many of the items in the Zeegen report are included in the plans for the addition to the building.

Recreation director Glen Gray testified he feels the present complement of parkland is adequate for the Georgetown area. He said he has no objection to use of the land at Cedarvale for a library.

"The only concern it ex-

pressed," said Gray, "was parking and since that time those concerns have been eliminated."

Gray pointed out that the hill at Cedarvale, presently used for tobogganing is a dangerous location for that activity. He said children have slid into the mature tree growth at the bottom of the hill and that the town has had to put rubber tires around the bases of telephone poles to help eliminate injuries.

Gray said that when the recreation department offices were located at Cedarvale, he personally destroyed two or three toboggans trying to get up the hill with his car under wintry conditions. The children had vacated the toboggans.

He said the North Halton Golf Club encourages the spontaneous use of its natural rolling terrain for tobogganing.

Under cross-examination

from Arnold, Gray expressed the opinion that Cedarvale and the Fairgrounds are the only two parks in Georgetown which would fit the description of community parks.

Betsy Cornwell, chief librarian for Halton Hills, testified that the present library on Church St. hasn't been large enough since Georgetown passed 5,000 in population. She said the building has little more than 4,000 square feet and that all available space except the furnace room is now being used. It has no room for reading and so few seating spaces that only 15 people could be accommodated in the building at one time, she said.

She said the library is about a third to a quarter of the size it should be, is 30 below the seating it should have, and has a book stock of one half or less of what it should be. The children's area is about half the average size and there are

no program or meeting rooms, she said.

Mrs. Cornwell said the library board chose the Cedarvale site because they felt the town needed a new facility at a site which is highly accessible to the community as a whole and where expansion is possible. She said the present library is located adjacent to one of the town's major commercial strips, but is not highly visible to that strip.

Questioned by board member J.M. Wheeler, Mrs. Cornwell said she was unhappy with provisions expansion plans for the present library allowed. Expansion of the present building would have necessitated three levels with supervision on each level, she said. It would mean extra staffing and an unsuitable division of books.

Asked by Wheeler if construction of a new library would make any difference to



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her personally as a professional librarian Mrs. Cornwell replied that provision of a new building would give the people of Georgetown and area fuller and more varied library service.

Mrs. Cornwell said a building of 15,000 sq. ft. is a good target for the existing population, but that 20-24,000

sq. ft. would be required for the town's projected population. She said the Georgetown library has over 11,000 users.

Mrs. Cornwell said that it generally felt that if a town has less than 50,000 population, it should not have library branches. Halton Hills now has two main service

centres in Acton and Georgetown and a small branch at Limehouse school which is only open part time.

In addition to a summary of all the evidence, town solicitor Ray Steele contended the OMB should rule only on the allocation of money and ought not interfere with council and library board's opinion about

the merits of a site.

Bert Arnold, in his summation, contended the building must comply with the R2 zoning and open space designation, since a library board is not a governing body. He also maintained the debenture can only be used for another purpose if the OMB determines the original use is no longer feasible.

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