

Region plan left gutless, planning member charges

By Bob Hartt
Halt Regional Council approved its first regional official plan Wednesday, but last minute changes left Planning Director Ed Cumming and some members of the planning committee upset.

Some members were appalled when council removed tables from the plan that indicated the type of housing mix that the region intended to plan for in the coming years.

Oakville Councillor Gord Reade raised the issue and objected to the ratio, or mix proposed in the plan because it leaned too much towards high and medium density developments.

"If we go with this we'll have townhouses and apartments coming out our ears. We can't just go blindly ahead turning the whole world upside down, because of a set of tables."

"This shouldn't be part of the housing policy. If this is passed it would be traumatic," Reade said.

He claimed there are already 250 to 300 vacant townhouses in Oakville and condominium highrises were going bankrupt.

"Take the tables out of the policy section and put it at the

back of the book where no one will read it."

Planning committee chairman Pat McLaughlin said he felt the mix being proposed was a good one. Milton Mayor Don Gordon, a member of the planning committee, noted that in all of the public meetings no one objected to the mix.

Oakville Councillor Archie Donaghey noted the province had paid \$80,000 for a housing study in Halton. The mix proposed is based on the findings of the study.

Donaghey noted projections show the average housing unit will be occupied by 2.8 people and he claimed it just doesn't make any sense to build four bedroom homes that people can't afford and don't need.

Following the meeting Donaghey charged that council had taken the guts out of the housing policy and left it with a broad philosophical statement.

Donaghey said it was imperative that people have a choice of lifestyles and places to live. "I've never said we should have all kinds of

apartments and townhouses, but people have to have a choice."

He said the plan now puts heavy emphasis on single family developments. Planners and some councillors have charged that without a definite statement in the plan, the type of housing will be left to developers.

"The way it is now, the community will be planned by developers and they are only interested in what will sell today, not what is good for the community in the long run," Donaghey said.

He told this newspaper of cases in the United States where ratepayers groups were suing municipalities for failing to provide a reasonable variety in housing types.

Donaghey deplored council's action but suggested the province would probably never approve a plan unless it has tables indicating a housing mix.

He said the public and councillors had supported the idea of having people living and working in Halton but when it comes down to voting, they went against that very principal.

Studies have shown that the

type of jobs apt to be generated in Halton will require accommodation for low and medium income earners as well as the high income earners.

"The availability of a wide choice of housing types will always be a major factor in attracting new industry," Donaghey claims.

Planning Director Ed Cumming told council the tables should stay in the plan and the gradual move towards a higher density of housing is entirely defensible.

"If the tables are out of the plan we won't be able to do the job as well as I'd like to see it done. It allows a degree of flexibility that renders the plan ineffectual on that score."

"Local planners say different, could it be just a matter of planning philosophy?" Reade asked.

"Yes, it could, we could both be wrong," Cumming replied.

Because Oakville has more land than other areas in the region without zoning applied, the impact of the housing mix policies would affect that area the greatest.

Donaghey opposed approval of the plan on the basis that the housing policies were removed.

Jim Watson of Milton opposed the plan as well. He was upset with a policy that would allow estate type development adjacent to villages and hamlets. The plan discourages estate type development adjacent to urban

areas. Watson felt the same rules should apply to hamlet and village settlements.

Halt Hills Councillor Russ Miller opposed the plan because he wasn't satisfied with the policies on agricultural land. He felt the plan carried too many restrictions on the land.

Oakville Councillor Laurie

Mannell opposed the resolution approving the plan without specifying the area of the plan he opposed.

The plan now goes to Queen's Park where it is to be considered by a variety of ministries and agencies. Regional officials anticipate it taking a year before the plan is finally approved.

Town urges stiffer penalties

Halt Hills council this week endorsed a move by the town of Trenton for heavier penalties for vandalism.

The resolution from Trenton pointed out the taxpayers have to pay for most vandalism and claimed present laws are ineffective as a deterrent.

It asked for a meeting of elected officials from the three levels of government, and police officials to be convened by the federal and provincial attorneys-general to discuss changing the laws to provide stiffer penalties for vandalism and restitution for the victims.

Continuing, the resolution urged all citizens to report acts of vandalism to the police.

The resolution will be sent to all municipalities in Ontario, to the Federal Minister of Justice, the Attorneys-General of Canada and Ontario, and the local MP and MPP.

Defer leasing road allowance

Halt Hills council decided to think a little longer before leasing a 66 foot unopened road allowance to the adjacent residents at 92 Elmore Drive, Acton.

Finance committee had recommended the land be leased, but Councillor Peter Marks said a large number of people use the land as an entrance and exit to private property which is used for recreational uses, such as cross-country skiing, and hiking. He said a lot of people would be affected. He said it would throw all the burden on an entrance down farther, beside another house. "Now the land is shared," he explained.

Councillor Russ Miller suggested a portion of the road allowance be leased, leaving a narrower area for public use. He said this way the residents or resident could fence the area.

Councillor Les Duby agreed the road allowance should be retained by the town, until the town decides what will be done with it.

Lake level no problem

Although the lake level is low this past week or so, one veteran lakeshore resident says it's always low at this time of year. In fact some years it's much lower.

The introduction of the new well caused others to wonder if the lake level was lower than it should be.

Beardmore officials see no problem, and agree the lake level is naturally lower at this time of the year.

Fall rains will likely bring the level up again.

Fall fair

Don't forget Acton fall fair this weekend!

Trial date to be set

October 2 has been set aside to fix a date at Milton Provincial Court for a rural Brampton man in connection with the highway traffic death of an Acton woman last week.

Ontario Provincial Police at Milton charged Jozef G. Hermans, R.R. 2, Brampton, with careless driving. With his car he is alleged to have struck the rear of the bicycle ridden by Darinka Moskun of Church Street.

Miss Moskun, 22, died soon after the mishap at Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital last Tuesday (September 5) morning.

Miss Moskun was riding her bike when the accident occurred west of town. She was on her way to work at the Frank Heller and Company plant.

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We will be "Closed" Saturday 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. so that our staff may enjoy the Acton Fair

4th WEEK WINNER: Greta Wedge, R.R. 1 Acton

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