

People's wishes ignored in plaza decision

After a stormy session, with Jerry Sprackman of Landawn Shopping Centre Ltd. accusing council of not listening to the people, nor reading reports, Halton Hills council Monday night, reversed a planning board decision and decided to take another look at the proposed shopping centre at Highway 7 and Churchill Road, Acton.

Sprackman, not listed on the agenda, asked to speak. Councillor Russ Miller said Sprackman had been heard several times and planning board had made the recommendation that the plaza was premature, and would cause a harmful impact on existing merchants, if built before there are more houses in Acton.

Sprackman said he had been coming to council for the past two years and wanted to hear from each councillor why they voted against the plaza.

"I'm the fellow you supported to develop

a shopping plaza in Georgetown. You asked for theatres, you got them, you asked for a shopping plaza you got it; you asked for an agreement, you got it."

He contended the question was dealt with in planning board, last week after he asked for a deferral because he was sick.

Sprackman said he had spent \$30,000 on planning studies for Acton, and pointed out council has on file a letter showing Zehrs has a lease, and a report from A.E. LePage supporting the plaza.

He said he was asked to meet with the merchants of Acton, but only four showed up, "representative of IGA, a cleaners, the A-B Supermarket and one other person. Those are all the interested citizens who showed up."

Sprackman said the four said they were not opposed to the shopping plaza as long as it was built after the Acton East

residential area is built.

"We don't know if Acton East will ever be built," he remarked.

He asked council if they had read any of the market studies, and suggested if they had not, they had nothing on which to base a decision since they had no study of their own. He claimed Zehrs would bring 7,000 people a week into Acton.

He told council he had sent two employees out to do a survey, asking if they wished to see a modern Zehrs supermarket at Highway 7 and Churchill Road, and the response in one day was 55 in favor and 7 against, out of 62 people questioned. He promised the survey would be continued all week.

"I want to know why you don't want this development when the people of Acton do. He said the study showed 80 per cent of the residents in favor. He said he did not think

councillors had read the studies. "Where I come from the majority rules. If you don't believe us, ask the people of Acton."

Sprackman said while his employees were doing their survey they met Mrs. June O'Rourke who was doing a survey of her own and asked if she could speak.

Before answering, Mayor Pete Pomeroy suggested if the whole matter was to be discussed again it should be referred back to planning board.

Councillor George Maltby said he would move it be referred. He said it should not have been discussed at last planning board in the absence of Sprackman, who had asked for a delay.

Councillor Les Duby said he wanted to make it clear he was not intimidated by someone telling him how his town should be planned. He said council had proceeded in the proper manner. "No matter what we

do we will be opposed by 50 per cent of the people."

Councillor Ross Knechtel said he resented Sprackman implying everyone is stupid, and said he opposed the matter being referred back to planning board.

Councillor Mike Armstrong said council must realize after reading the report they have to decide whether or not they are going to undermine existing Acton merchants.

Mrs. June O'Rourke said she decided to take up a petition, because she and some friends wanted a plaza. "Out of 315 people in the west end of Acton we have only had four refusals to sign the petition favoring the shopping plaza." She predicted there would be even fewer refusals when they reached the other end of town.

She said people will still use the downtown area, but claimed residents are en-

titled to a shopping plaza. She said half of the residents do their grocery shopping out of town, mostly in Guelph.

Jake Kuiken told council there were more stores in Acton when he came there 15 years ago, than there are now, and cited the population at that time as 4,200, compared to the present 8,500. He said Acton needs more stores, and cited Strathroy, of similar size with two plazas and a downtown shopping area as an example of an area where all stores were doing well.

"Whether it's a shopping plaza or more shopping facilities, it is a must. It would help the community as far as employment."

Kuiken said a rough study showed 60 per cent of food shoppers and 75 per cent of shoppers for other goods, go out of town.

Councillor Ed Wood declared a conflict of interest.

The Acton Free Press

One Hundred and Fourth Year.—No. 25.

ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1978

Twenty Eight Pages.—Fifteen Cents.

Leather industry heel 'n toe over higher prices, quotas

About 2,400 new jobs exist in the leather and shoe manufacturing industries since Ottawa imposed quotas on shoe imports last year. None of the new jobs are at Beardmore and Co. Ltd.

Les Duby, personnel manager at Beardmore and Co. Ltd., said in a telephone interview Tuesday "We haven't noticed any great change in business." "Most certainly the way to go is to expect changes in the next few months," Mr. Duby said.

Five or six people have been hired in the past three months, but they are replacing retiring workers, Mr. Duby said.

About 1,000 of the new jobs created exist in the tanning industry. The plant and staff at Beardmore and Co. Ltd., amounted to 436 in October.

Another effect of the quotas, the rising prices for leather and the devaluation of the Canadian dollar is that shoe manufacturers and tanners are working more in concert. There is more communication between the two industries.

For example, Beardmore and Co. Ltd. president Peter Dunham told the Shoe Manufacturers' Association (Continued on Page 5)



Beardmore and Co. Ltd. President Peter Dunham assured shoe manufacturers the nation's tanners are able to handle more orders.

Swetman Shoes sees little effect

Business is as usual at Swetman's Shoe Store in spite of the federal import quota on shoes, according to owner Alma Swetman.

The quota restricted imports to 80 per cent thus leaving Canadian manufacturers to provide the other 20 per cent. As a result, some press reports claim manufacturers are behind in orders, causing slow deliveries to shoe stores.

Mrs. Swetman explained they have no trouble supplying customers with most shoes as their stock is ordered at least eight months in advance. She did admit however that any re-orders, especially in ladies dress shoes, have been slow in coming in, and in some cases, they have had to go to a new supplier to provide them with goods.

"We use to be able to order a certain shoe for a customer on Monday and have it by the end of the week," she noted. "But now, it is tied up weeks, or we get a statement saying it is out of stock."

Mrs. Swetman pointed out that some 80 per cent of the store's winter wear is Canadian-made anyway, so the quota is not forcing her to bring in brands they would not normally carry. However, when summer comes, the story will be different she claimed. She explained that the Canadian manufacturers can not supply them with the sandals and thongs which are made in Brazil, India and Spain.

"Now the Canadian Manufacturers will be forced to go into these lines," she said, "which is good. We can make a superior product and eventually service the customer better."

Mrs. Swetman believes that, in Acton at least, Canadian-made shoes sell as quickly as imports. "I don't know if it is just because we are a tannery town and people are loyal to Canadian leather, or what it is, but people always prefer leather." She noted her store once bought a synthetic line of shoes, but they did not sell. "People want the real thing."

Most of the shoes sold in Swetman's, the owner pointed out, are made by manufacturers who buy Beardmore leather, thus making them local shoes. "Naturalizers, Buster Brown, Kaufman, Grebb, Jarman shoes, Savage... all of them buy local leather."

Production of shoes has gone up 27 per cent Mrs. Swetman said, causing increased employment in some factories. When the import quota is lifted, in three years, she does not feel the production will decrease.

"Industries are spending millions to put additions on their plants, adding new equipment etc. They are going into style they did not produce before, and are not going to let this all go to waste in three years." She said that within three years, Canadians will have gotten use to Canadian made shoes, and will be able to get all styles made in Canada.

Mrs. Swetman, did however, say she has heard of other shoe stores who have been having a trouble getting requested items as they had not ordered as far in advance as the Swetman's had.

Mrs. Swetman is not sure how delivery will be once they have to make several re-orders. She apologizes to her customers who must wait if special orders are required for ladies' dress shoes but, she says, "It is out of our hands."



Visions of sugarplums danced through their heads. Angelic Danny and Kathy Nellis, cozily wrapped in a handmade quilt, await Santa's arrival. With the little smiles on their lips, it is not hard to tell what they are dreaming of.

Shopping area possible at Force Electric plant

There is a possibility the old Force Electric plant, now standing vacant, beside the C.N.R. tracks, could become an extension of the downtown shopping area of Acton.

Halton Hills planning board heard a proposal last Tuesday night from Art Gordon who would like the property rezoned from industrial to residential.

Gordon said he would like to replace the closed factory with stores and apartments. He did not specify the number

of stores involved.

He suggested such a commercial development would do a lot for Acton's downtown business area and remove an eyesore.

Gordon said he wasn't sure if the existing building would be refurbished into stores or demolished with a new structure being built. He said he'd prefer to see the old factory torn down and a new building constructed but would leave that decision to his engineers and architects.

Councillor Les Duby observed a traffic study would be needed since there is already a problem in that area.

Gordon concluded he thought access to the stores should be off Eastern Avenue so traffic could tie in with Foodland and Canadian Tire parking lots. He also predicted this would solve much of the traffic problems.

Planning board decided to send the topic to the planner for review.

Office closed

In order that the staff of The Acton Free Press may observe Christmas with their families, the Willow St. office will be closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Year's Day. Regular business hours apply for all other days. This applies also to the news and advertising departments and the composing and press rooms.

The Acton Free Press will be published Thursday next week, instead of the regular Wednesday publication, also due to Christmas.

Merry Christmas

May you rejoice in the spirit and gladness that this Holy holiday brings.



Acton Citizens' Band members proved they could sing as well as play instruments well at the band's annual Christmas concert Sunday night. The versatile musicians delighted the

audience at McKenzie-Smith school with Christmas, martial and contemporary music. See story inside.

Hydro corridor

Ric Morrow asks independent study

In one of his last acts before retiring as Halton regional chairman, Ric Morrow requested Minister of Energy James Auld arrange an independent study of the proposal to bring a 500 kV transmission corridor from the Bruce generating station on Lake Huron through Halton Hills to the substation at Milton.

Official plan and zoning changes have been requested by Ontario Hydro to bring the corridor through Halton Hills and the town has rejected them for three reasons:

(a) better alternatives for power transmission from Bruce exist than that proposed by Ontario Hydro including the Essa alternative.

(b) even if it is determined the transmission corridor has to be brought to Milton then there is still a better alternative route available through the region of Halton from Kitchener along the 401 corridor to the Milton substation, twinning the

present Nanticoke to Pickering line and thus avoiding disturbing the agricultural setting of the rural area of Halton Hills and unnecessary environmental blight.

(c) Further, even if it is determined the line must come through Halton Hills the town believes a detailed independent study should be done to insure that the best route through Halton Hills has been chosen as was done by the Government with respect to chairman Cavely of the Environmental Hearing Board on the section of the route from point 33 to 95.

Morrow pointed out it is the desire of regional council that the minister appoint a commissioner of inquiry, or some other independent person, to carry out a detailed independent study of the three items.

The letter also points out that if an independent inquiry is permitted regional council would concur with its finding.

Morrow wrote it is the Region's contention the Solandt (Continued on Page 4)