

# Leishman Park fate in OMB hands

What constitutes Acton parkland to one person is little more than drainage ditch to another, the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) learned last Wednesday.

Halton Hills authorities are satisfied the recreations needs of Mill St. E. and Bovis subdivision are taken care of, the OMB heard. The town wants to dispose of land at the corner of Mill St. E. and Acton Blvd., known as Leishman Park, in order to gain what officials termed needed recreation land near Fairy Lake.

About 45 families on 22 properties in the Leishman Park neighborhood want to hang onto that land, and according to one witness, develop it into a passive park.

Much of the day-long hearing in the council chambers focused on the merits of another piece of land. That land was called Bovis Park by town planning and recreation department staff.

"I don't think any other municipality, except Halton Hills, would dare call it a park," Ross Knechtel, 29 Rosemary Rd., told the OMB. Mr. Knechtel, who is also a councillor, represented opponents to the town's efforts to change the zoning. Ten residents and two children sat in the audience.

Mr. Knechtel resisted the use of the word "park" when referred to the Bovis property by town solicitor Ray Steele. "I don't call it park."

OMB meeting chairman Peter J. Wilkes and member P.M. Brooks also learned from town recreation director Glen Gray that people use school lands opposite Leishman Park—for baseball and soccer.

"There are a lot of playing grounds," Mr. Knechtel said referring to the lands round M.Z. Bennett and McKenzie-Smith schools. "I don't think it can be called a park."

Town officials, on the other hand, though they mention the school grounds and how they are used, do not include that acreage in a formula for calculating the needs of a neighborhood for parkland. Figures used by the town, were challenged by Mr. Knechtel.

Brian Kropf, Halton Hills Deputy Planning Director, indicated that not all of Bovis Park need be included in the formula. If one just takes both halves of the larger portion, the 3.8 acres going east off Wallace Ave., that is enough to meet the standard based on a population estimate of 1,500 give or take 25 or 50 people. The standard is to be not less than 2.5 acres per 1,000 people.

Mr. Knechtel, on the other hand, places the population at 2,000 rather than 1,500. He also quarrels with the inclusion of the north half of the land in the formula. Why?

"There is no reasonable access to it from Wallace and from the east end there is no access unless you walk down the drainage ditch in rubber boots."

The southern half of the land, which is traversed by an intermittent stream, could be called park, said Mr. Knechtel. However, "nothing has been done with it for six years."

In all, said the planner, Bovis Park consists of 5 1/2 acres traversed by a drainage system, part of which has grass slopes and part of which is concrete.

Town Parks and Recreation Director Glen Gray described the Bovis land as being "a linear park". It, therefore, encourages some kinds of activity such as jogging and cross-country skiing.

"While there is a drainage ditch, there is enough bank and side to encourage that kind of recreation. I look at a number of recreational opportunities," Mr. Gray said.

Both Mr. Gray and Mr. Kropf said they did not

think Leishman Park is necessary. Both also said the half-acre property could be best used for residential.

Also represented at the OMB was Rugby Construction Co. of Cooksville which has negotiated with Halton Hills for the acquisition of Leishman Park in exchange for land the company owns, but cannot build on, north of School Creek, west of Main St. up to Elizabeth Drive.

The land is part of the Credit River flood plain and the Credit Valley Conservation Authority will not permit construction, Leishman Park, 448 feet by 52 feet has enough land for about seven lots, the OMB learned.

On March 6, 1978 council passed a resolution recommending an exchange with Rugby Construction.

Mr. Gray, the recreation director, also indicated that acquisition of the Rugby property near Fairy Lake would help boost park facilities on Elizabeth Dr.

Twice before the OMB has ruled in favor of residents who want to keep Leishman Park. In 1965 the board ruled the land could not be rezoned. Two years later the board exempted the half acre lot from being rezoned under a comprehensive bylaw. Those actions took place prior to regional government.

Mr. Knechtel told the OMB that residents in the vicinity of Leishman Park "have consistently asked the town to keep it as a park." He also told the board residents have indicated a willingness to develop the park at their own expense.

The citizens' lawyer, Bruce Payne of Guelph, introduced a copy of 1953 deed which conveyed the land which was to be known as John R. Leishman



"Linear park" is how Halton Hills Recreation Director Glen Gray described Bovis Park, part of which is shown by Ross Knechtel, Mr. Knechtel and other area residents opposed the rezoning of Leishman Park to residential use during last Wednesday's Ontario Municipal Board hearing. The recreation department and planning departments

contend that Leishman Park is not required to meet the recreation needs of the neighborhood. The town indicated it would like to rezone Leishman Park for homes in order to exchange that land for some acreage near Fairy Lake which is owned by a construction company.

Park. In argument the lawyer said it was the intention of both the giver and receiver to have the land as park.

Town lawyer Ray Steele countered by saying that all the document states is that the land to be

dedicated carry that name. "The municipality has the right to sell it as long as the money is used for park purposes. And that's the purpose here."

"It may well have been intended for park purposes; but it is not needed," said the town lawyer.

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The flower beds in front of Acton Library sometimes also serve as a beach for town mothers who wait for their children. Liz Bailey of Elmore Dr., left, and her friend Linda Pilgrim, Main St. E., chat while waiting for the library's time to return the children.

## Hoe backs out Disston looks for new buyer

Disston Canada Inc. is looking for another purchaser for the industrial woodworking products division of its plant, destined to go out of production at the end of September.

It was announced last Friday that R. Hoe and Company will not be taking over the woodworking division as previously announced. Negotiations have been terminated. Disston, meanwhile, is still moving its plant to Montreal.

George Maltby, councillor actively engaged in job finding for Disston workers soon to be out of work, confirmed he had talked with Johan Sorensen of the Sandvik Group, owners of Disston, recently. Mr. Sorensen stated the company is making further negotiations with other companies. Meetings will take place this week and Sorensen is hopeful of an agreement in principle with another firm, Maltby said.

He was also assured by Sorensen that the woodworking division of Disston up

for sale will keep in production until a sale is effected. Twenty-five jobs hinge on these successful negotiations.

Enor Nilsson, Manager of Disston of Canada Inc., Acton, told this newspaper the sale to R. Hoe and Company was definitely off but confirmed further negotiations were in the works with other purchasers. He said the company was trying to arrange a similar deal as that with R. Hoe and hoped to make an announcement soon.

He declined to comment on any change in closing date or possible extension of working schedule for the woodworking division.

Representatives of the United Steel Workers of America, Local 8663, were unavailable for comment.

Maltby remarked he had had a number of calls from local companies with offers of employment for redundant Disston workers.

"For this stage, response from local companies has been good," he said.

### Owner says:

## Hotel to be rebuilt

The Dominion Hotel will be rebuilt according to owner Cosmo Mercuri, although he doesn't know how long it'll take.

"The Dominion is not completely lost" he said, describing the dated stone that will be replaced in the new hotel. Some of the old timbers may be reusable, Mercuri hopes. The name will remain the same.

He plans to rebuild the same as before perhaps moving the building back a little, he said.

Plans for a dining room extension were on the drawing board before the fire occurred.

Right now the business of cleanup is uppermost in Mercuri's mind after receiving permission Monday from the fire-marshall's office to tear down the remainder of the building.

"It'll cost a fortune," stated Mercuri referring to cost of hiring a contractor to remove the rubble. Finding a place to dump it is another problem as the Halton dump usually refuses to accept building rubble.

Mercuri says his insurance wouldn't cover the cost of rebuilding and cleanup. He's "depressed", he says because he has nothing to do now but make telephone calls trying to set in motion the rebuilding process.

In the two-and-a-half years since Mercuri took over the Dominion, he said he's doubled business. Then the hotel sold 27 thousand gallons of beer a year, he stated, now he sells 55 thousand gallons.

"We used to have a lot of fun," he said morosely.



John Simpson

## New head for middle school

Halton Board of Education named John Simpson to be the new principal of McKenzie-Smith Middle School.

Mr. Simpson was transferred from the principalship of Pineview elementary school, south of Georgetown, to Acton. He has been working in the school and the board's action Thursday at Burlington confirmed the appointment.



Marie Murray represented Halton in the CNE Dairy Princess competition. See Page 3.

## Back to school for 2,500 Acton students

It's back to school on Wednesday for about 2,500 Acton and area students who'll be wearing solemn expressions while mothers try to restrain their glee.

In most area schools, enrolment is slightly down from last year with the exception of Saint Joseph's Separate School, Acton, whose enrolment is up 30 from 165 in June.

McKenzie-Smith Middle School has a stable enrolment of just over 400. They have several new staff members including principal John Simpson who will be stepping into the place vacated by Gary Dawkins' recent untimely death.

A new secretary, Shirley Somerville will be at McKenzie-Smith as well as half-time Grade 8 core teacher, Pat Gudgeon from Georgetown who was at McKenzie-Smith two years ago.

Vice-principal Carl Hymers said staff were trying to keep up the same innova-

tions initiated by Gary Dawkins and operate the school in similar fashion.

Principal Ron Chatten said Robert Little School will have an enrolment of 445 down 60 from last year. Only new addition to the staff will be Ann McInlayre, part-time morning kindergarten teacher.

Speyside School, also under the principalship of Ron Chatten has an enrolment of 137 and one teacher less.

M.Z. Bennett School enrolment is "about the same" at 400, according to principal Doug Magwood. A new remedial teacher Wendy Schau will be at the school as will part-time teacher Linda Bobor.

Acton High School also expects the same enrolment at 745 with two new teachers Marian Hughes, history, and Jane Zarowny, department head. High School principal Wally Walkins commented the school "was proceeding steadfastly and trying to offer a first class program with a

sense of family and an occasional burst of excellence."

Saint Joseph's Separate School, the only school with higher enrolment, has 185 students this year and four new teachers. Donna Robertson will be teaching grade 1, Sharon Bradley grades 3-4, Joanne Label,

oral French in grades 6,7 and 8 plus a grade 6-7 homeroom, and Catherine Barrett, will teach part-time in the reading resource centre.

Principal Sean Briggs commented on the growth of Saint Joseph's and the ad-

## Enrolment down except for St. Joseph's school

dition of another portable classroom this year, saying he was looking forward to a new school building in the future.

Limehouse School will have approximately 160 students this fall, according to vice-principal Al Zanatta, down from 175 last season.

New teachers, replacing leaving staff, include Bob Pinkerton who will take a 3-4 class and two part-time teachers, Erica Andrew in grade 6 and Marian Cleave, kindergarten.

Mrs. Fisher, principal of Brookville School, states enrolment is down by exactly four pupils this year at 503. New teachers at Brookville will be Leanne Case and Peter Opreka in grade 5 and Vi Bain, a new librarian.

In all cases, enrolment figures are tentative and subject to alteration as new students filter into schools during the first weeks of the term.

## Lifeline numbers

Want to help the best people? Here are numbers to phone:

- (Acton Clergy Group and Acton Group One)
- Chairmen: Arlene Bruce, 853-1287
- Don Sydney, 853-1835
- Accessionaries: John Kavanaugh, 853-1433
- Beverly Ormby, 853-2372
- Parish Nurses: Don Gregg, 853-6187
- Margaret Kirkwood, 853-6889
- Chaplain: Louise & Archie Hawkins, 853-1453
- Salvation Army, 853-1140
- Food: Mary Lillie, 853-4723
- Barb Walton, 853-1006
- Brendan Albert, 853-1283
- Prayer Ministry: Chuck Boston, 853-2080
- Joanne Marks, 853-2095
- Language: Arlene Bruce, 853-1287