

Downtown businessmen oppose new plaza

Planning board resembled a court hearing Tuesday when representatives of parties influenced by the proposed Guelph Street plaza expressed and justified their opinions.

Opposition was voiced by Ralph Fletcher, on behalf of the Downtown Businessmen's Association (DBA) and Tim Bates, legal adviser for the Georgetown branch of Loblaws.

Like developer Al Pilutti, they defended their positions with the sincerity and vigor of men on trial.

Planning board members, like an observant jury, quietly absorbed the relayed information.

Coun. Ern Hyde recommended the plaza issue be deferred for a two week period, during which time the planning department and developer will prepare a presentation on the proposed plaza to the DBA and Loblaws' lawyer. Unanimously this motion was carried.

"We are not closed-minded," said Mr. Fletcher on behalf of the DBA. "If we can change our minds by justifying a need for the plaza, well and good..."

The application for the proposed plaza will not be submitted to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) until following a special meeting, town planner Mario Venditti said.

He explained that if necessary the application, accompanied by objections, will be sent to the OMB.

"With the number of businesses in town now, no one is getting rich... if you expand the commercial area it will hurt what we already have in town," Mr. Fletcher said. "I don't think you want downtown and the strip plazas to die, and that's what will happen if you continue to rezone land for commercial property," he said.

"Some stores downtown and in the plaza have already closed, and from our investigation there is no need for more stores."

He said what Georgetown does need is a theatre and more industry, "so people can live here, and support houses and families here."

Coun. Ric Morrow feels "the DBA should take the opposite view."

He listed a major food store and automotive dealership as the main components of the proposed plaza, and pointed out they would not be competitors of downtown businessmen.

"The feeling from the public represents a demand and need for another large food store operator to settle in Georgetown," Mr. Morrow said.

"In the back of my mind, I know where my wife and neighbors shop... it's like old home week for Georgetown at Shopper's World (a plaza in Brampton). If there was higher commercial development more people would shop in Georgetown."

"The major expenditure is food and if people buy food here, they will buy everything here—they wouldn't drive 15

miles for shoes because it's uneconomical," Mr. Morrow said.

"But if they go to Brampton to buy food, they are going to go through the gambit of stores there—including shoe stores," he said.

Mr. Morrow said he thinks the downtown business area should be modernized and a major food store constructed on Guelph Street.

"We don't need more strip plazas," Mr. Fletcher said. "They're going to be a bone to the town. We need a theatre and a closed mall and I don't care if there are 10 shoe stores in it."

He added that "Georgetown has a huge Loblaws, large A&P, good IGA, and it is the unanimous opinion of the downtown merchants association that we don't need another food store."

"That's your opinion," said Mr. Morrow.

Developer Al Pilutti said, "We have evidence to substantiate our findings that 53 percent of the people of Georgetown shop out-of-town, so we need another supermarket."

He recommended to council that a presentation be made to the merchants highlighting "the beneficial aspects to all citizens" of a new plaza.

His motion was passed later in the meeting after Coun. Hyde reintroduced it.

On behalf of Loblaws, Mr. Bates outlined the objections already presented to council orally and in letter form.

"Shoppers go to the large regional centres for the full convenience of shopping there, and the proposed centre would not attract those shoppers because of its limited commercial capacity and space," he said.

The proposed development is "unnecessary" and "premature" because "there is no concrete evidence that it will succeed," Mr. Bates said.

Coun. Ric Morrow pointed out the expansion of Loblaws indicated an increased need for more food shopping facilities in Georgetown and questioned whether "another large food store (does) not reflect competition and the free markets."

"If people want to invest money in another food store why shouldn't they be given an opportunity to try it?"

Mr. Bates echoed the opinion of the DBA that supermarket shopping in Georgetown is adequate, and voiced concern that another food store may not achieve success.

"It's not your business—you're not putting up the capital to build the store," Mr. Morrow said. "Loblaws doesn't want to give up the singular monopolistic ability it has in the triangle."

He pointed out Loblaws had opposed other commercial developments in the past. "Loblaws doesn't want competition, is that what you're saying?" he asked Mr. Bates.

Bates suggested, "Council could look at the situation seriously concerning the stability of future development." He said there was no need to rehash the objections raised by his client in a letter to council.

"Mr. Fletcher, I think you've got the idea we are opposing the downtown businessmen, and that's not true," said Coun. Hyde.

"We want to co-operate with you directly and indirectly to see the proposed development in more detail and we'll try to iron it out to the best for everyone, and most specifically best for the town and the long range future of the town."



Arctic traveller Barry Griffiths of Georgetown (left) and Laurie Jones, president of the Halton Field Naturalists.

Short growing season in Arctic, speaker tells naturalists

The faces of the Arctic, both human and natural, were the subject of a slide show at the season's first meeting of the Halton Field Naturalists Tuesday at Harrison School.

About 50 people watched slides shot by Barry Griffiths of Noble Court, Georgetown. It was the largest turnout for some time, said club president, Laurie Jones.

Mr. Griffiths, a school principal in North York, has visited the Arctic for four summers, two with the air force reserve and two as a guide. He is a former president of the Ontario Federation of Naturalists and past editor of Young Naturalist magazine.

Starting with slides of the face of the land from the shores of Hudson Bay west to Bathurst Inlet and north from the tree line to Resolute Bay and Gries Fjord, Canada's

most northerly settlement, Griffiths then moved to the tiny human settlements in the region.

Although he showed no slides of the traditional igloo, it always being summer and from 45 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit, Griffith's slides showed Inuit people living in tents, wooden houses, polygonal structures and in one case an entirely prefabricated village complete with its own school, hospital, electric system and underground telephone system for local calls.

Remains of stone buildings with whalebone rafters, which were roofed with caribou skins, Mr. Griffiths also photographed the structures of Inuit who came from Greenland 600 years ago as well as burial grounds.

The permafrost prevents

burial in the ground, Griffiths explained, and the Inuit cover their dead with stones. In some cases the dead were just put on the ground with an empty cup for the spirit's use in the afterworld.

He showed one burial spot he estimated as being 30 years old.

Some people believe that the Arctic is covered with flowers in the summer, Mr. Griffiths said, but that's not the case.

"The growing season is very short," he said, "three to five days. You've got to be in the right place at the right time."

In the Arctic, because of the short season and harshness of the climate, the tallest plant is often only four inches high. Griffiths said the flowering fireweed, which can grow to five feet in Ontario, there reaches a height of one-half

inch.

Mr. Griffiths showed aerial views of a 60,000 head caribou herd and a school of 4,000 Beluga whales as well as shots of lemmings, ground squirrels and numerous birds including the rare Ivory gull, which has only two known nesting areas in North America.

While in the Inuit settlements, Mr. Griffiths photographed the faces of the inhabitants from that of the traditional hunter, to the sculptor, the women in hand-made clothes, and children with husky pups.

Sled dogs are considered by the Inuit merely as beasts of burden now, Mr. Griffiths said and with the appearance of the snowmobiles in the Arctic, are kept only for their fur which is used to trim garments.

"You'd go crazy if you had to live all year in a caribou outfit," Griffiths said.

Dirty laundry discussed at police commission meeting

Halton's police commissioners don't want to be taken to the cleaners by the police association's 199 uniformed and 38 plain-clothed members.

Following the advice Thursday of Police Chief Ken Skerrett, the Commission delayed approving a tender form for dry cleaning police clothes.

The issue is whether the three shirts supplied as part of the uniform should be laundered at the expense of the region or the individual. The commissioners believe the police should wash their own dirty shirts.

As well, the commission wants to change its method of reimbursing the association members. Previously they

were paid in advance on a chit system "cumbersome" to manage, Skerrett said.

Commission chairman Glen Magnuson said the commission should pay the dry cleaning bills after the clothes have been cleaned.

Oakville Mayor Harry Barrett said the police should wash their dirty shirts at home

or take them to the cleaners themselves, rather than the police commission paying for delivery to the station or the policeman's home.

Police chief Skerrett, who will meet with the police association, told the commissioners "the association wants more than what's shown here (in the tender form)."

Eclipse will perform from 4 a.m. to 7 a.m. Sunday.

Local band on TV show

Eclipse a Georgetown rock band will do a three hour concert for the first Canadian telethon to raise money for muscular dystrophy.

Sponsored by the Brampton-Bramalea firefighters, the telethon will run from 3 p.m. Sept. 25 through 3 p.m. Sept.

25. It will be filmed live by Roger's Cable Television, channel 10, at the Lester B. Pearson theatre in Bramalea Civic Centre, 150 Central Park Drive, Bramalea.

Eclipse will perform from 4 a.m. to 7 a.m. Sunday.

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