

Criticism delays regional plan

Strong condemnations of Halton region's apparent intention to control agricultural land use has helped convince regional planning committee chairman Pat McLaughlin that more time is needed to review Halton's first official plan before it is adopted by regional council and sent to the ministry of housing for final approval.

Expected to endorse the document after nearly five years of preparation at last Wednesday's meeting, council instead voted to defer consideration of the official plan at Coun. McLaughlin's suggestion.

"I thought we had a plan that was pretty much acceptable, but it appears there are still some questions to be answered," he conceded after hearing critical appraisals of the document by two Halton Hills farmers. "As chairman of the committee, I'm willing to take it back to our Aug. 29 meeting and get these points ironed out so that you can accept or reject

it all at the Sept. 8 council meeting."

"Numerous public meetings" have provided all the input from Halton citizens that is needed, Coun. Carl Eriksen of Oakville argued. The planning committee, he pointed out, has been criticized in the past "for spending too much time with the public" and debate over the plan at the council level cannot be avoided by deferral.

Halton Hills Coun. Roy Booth, however, commended chairman McLaughlin for his "responsible attitude" toward the evident need for further study. Burlington Coun. Ben Clipfeli nevertheless warned that deferral will lead to disaster if council intends to satisfy everyone.

Regional chairman Ric Morrow predicted that, once adopted by council, the official plan will be in the minister of housing's hands for about a year. During that time, he said, updates and revisions

can be expected to be made to the plan regularly. Oakville Coun. Mac Anderson added that Mr. Morrow was being optimistic because his municipality's official plan has been before the minister for the past four years.

Wednesday's decision to defer the plan came shortly after Rod Pinkney of RR3, Georgetown and Peter Branch of RR1, Norval took turns before council listing the official plan's shortcomings with respect to agricultural practices in Halton.

Referring to the plan, Mr. Pinkney contended that the region's intention to take over the stewardship of Halton farms does not represent the freedom which he and many others fought to preserve during the Second World War.

He challenged council to find farm leaders as efficient and well-respected as Reford Gardhouse, the Halton Hills farmer and president of last year's Royal Agricultural Winter Fair.

Mr. Pinkney pointed out that control of power brings with it responsibility. He commented that the region, with its official plan, is committing itself and future councils to honor legal agreements outlined in the plan.

Although he admitted he does not know all the details of the matter, Mr. Pinkney expressed his belief that Halton Hills council, as Georgetown council's successor, should honor legal agreements that still bind the town to allowing Focal Properties Ltd. to develop an area south of Georgetown.

Mr. Pinkney and Mr. Branch both contended that the official plan has failed to honor alleged verbal agreements by regional planners to remove the concept of land freezes from the plan. According to Mr. Pinkney, the words pertaining to land freezes have been taken out but the intention of the plan, as outlined elsewhere in the document, has not changed.

Both speakers defended the farm owner's right to sell his property to anyone for any purpose without infringement by regional planners, and both threatened to take the official plan before the Ontario Municipal Board unless they and other farmers are afforded the opportunity to have their concerns resolved.

Mr. Branch doubted that such differences in opinion could be resolved at the regional council level, saying that Halton Hills and Milton councillors alone seem to understand the farmers' situation.

The former civil servant called Ontario's Agricultural Code of Practice, to which the official plan alludes, a "mon-

strously" that imposes unnecessary restrictions upon a farmer's rights as a citizen. He further cited a number of sections in the new official

plan which he charged are not the least bit practical or fair to rural landowners and farmers. Halton Hills Coun. Russ Miller agreed that the code of

practice "just disgusting" and endorsed Mr. Branch's suggestion that a month's deferral of the plan's adoption should be granted.



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Link 'semis' approved for south Acton

A revised development proposal for three residential lots off Main Street south, Acton, has been approved in principle by the town planning board.

Southfield Holdings Ltd. wants to build six "linked" semi-detached homes on the 253-foot by 146-foot parcel of land facing Cobblehill Road which the former Acton committee of adjustment saw in 1973 as a suitable site for residential developments. The site is now owned by Chateau Belair Developments Ltd.

Deputy planning director Brian Kropp pointed out the close proximity of the Beardmore Tannery in the proposed site in a report that warned of its possible incompatibility because of the "obnoxious odors" the tannery has emitted in the past.

"However, the official plan does designate the property for (residential) use and, as the proposal before us now represents a 50 per cent reduction in the number of units which could be expected, we feel the proposal is a viable and desirable alternative," Mr. Kropp explained.

Coun. Les Duby asked the planning department to elaborate on its report that an existing private drive into the site, intended for use by the

residents of all three lots, can be properly aligned with Cobblehill Road to form a four-way intersection at Main Street.

Rod Kruger, a consulting engineer who worked on the proposal, informed the board that, despite its location on the crest of a hill, the suggested intersection at Cobblehill Road does not present any major problems to traffic flow.

Concerns over the handling of traffic at the intersection prompted councillors Duby and Peter Marks to suggest that the board's approval in principle should be held up until further information is made available. At the urging of Coun. Russ Miller, however, approval was granted.

Blackout

Lightning caused a minor power failure at Indusmin Quarries last week, resulting in a disruption of work on one shift.

Don Murdey, plant manager said the lightning came in on the primary crusher circuit, throwing the circuit breaker, it was necessary to stop work on that machine for one shift while awaiting the arrival of necessary parts to put the machine back into working order.

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