



NORVAL WINTER CARNIVAL BONFIRE

This little Norval girl knew where to go to keep warm at her hamlet's community day last week. Pictured here, she leads

a hand stoking the bon-fire located near the centre of the action during the Sunday community fun.

Actonians leaving town to shop, teacher recommends promotion

By JOHN BOTTOMLEY
Herald special
Acton must plan ahead and promote itself if it wants to avoid the decay of its downtown core, the Acton Chamber of Commerce was told Monday night.

Acton high school teacher Boris Sheen made the statement at the Chamber's annual general meeting, held in the citizen's band hall. He based his comments on the results of a survey conducted last fall by the students at the Acton high school.

The study found that Actonians use or would use services provided in town, but overwhelmingly preferred to go out of town for goods, particularly for clothing.

Recognizing the attraction of shopping malls, the study recommended that Acton develop a mall atmosphere in their downtown by widening sidewalks, eliminating some if not all parking on Main Street,

installing plants, trees, benches and old fashioned lights to retain the charm of old Acton within the mall atmosphere.

CHALLENGED MERCHANTS
He challenged the merchants to do something collectively that would draw people into the downtown. "Ask yourself, what has Acton done collectively that is different?"

Some people like shopping in a small town because of the personal service they can get. Mr. Sheen urged merchants to cultivate a patient and friendly attitude, and promote it. Once Acton has got this old Acton charm in a mall atmosphere "sell the image, the sizzle, not the steak."

The image is particularly important in Acton, where the students' survey showed that high prices and poor selection were frequently mentioned problems in town. Mr. Sheen advised local merchants that lowered price and a faster

turnaround in inventory would give them a bigger selection.

"In a nutshell, and this is an oversimplification, create and sell the mall atmosphere, improve the parking situation with back parking lots, and assume a more flexible pricing and inventory policy and the result should be a better variety for the consumer and more business for the downtown.

NEW OFFICERS
New officers of the chamber were elected during the meeting. President is Jake Kuiken, first vice president is Bert Hinton, second vice president is John McNabb, secretary is Janet Fleming, treasurer is John Worthington and past president is Louis Charlebois. Four two year directors

were also named: Dave Whiting, Terry Grubbe, Norm Milroy and Elmer Dunn. One year directors chosen were John Allinson, Dave Swelman and Cory Van Merkesteln.

A special presentation was made to Kay and Dave Dills, for their contributions to the town over the years. Mrs. Fleming, in making the presentation, told the audience "we owe them a vote of thanks."

Fred Wright continued a long tradition by saying grace before the dinner. Mr. Wright just turned 86 on Robbie Burns night, January 25.

President Kuiken described 1978 as a very good year for the chamber, particularly for the number of new members the chamber attracted.

Decision jeopardizes business, council won't support appeal

A Georgetown couple whose industrial-commercial business at 245 Guelph Street has been jeopardized by a recent decision of the Halton Hills Committee of Adjustment won sympathy from some members of town council Monday night, but the only support offered came from a developer seated in the gallery who volunteered to withdraw his company's objection to the business.

According to Acting Mayor Roy Booth, developer Jerry Sprackman of Halton Hills Shopping Centre Ltd. had indicated his willingness to withdraw the company's objection to George and Margaret Howie's application for a minor variance that would allow the partial commercial use of their industrial property. Mr. Sprackman was on hand at Monday's meeting to hear council's discussion of his proposal for a major shopping plaza in Acton.

VOTE TO ADVISE
Council, however, voted simply to advise the Howies of their right to appeal the Committee of Adjustment decision before the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) but offered no support.

The Committee of Adjustment rejected the couple's application Jan. 31 after hearing objections from lawyers for Mr. Sprackman's company which is building a new shopping plaza adjacent to the site, and for the Georgetown Business and Professional Association, which opposes the commercial use of any industrially-zoned land.

Calling his Guelph Street light manufacturing business the culmination of a boyhood dream, Mr. Howie told council that Aladdin Lighting, the commercial showroom added onto the operation recently illustrates the success enjoyed by the business since its incorporation in 1974.

The operation's recent move a short distance down the road, he said, was further indication that their efforts and long hours were paying off. The operation currently employs seven workers, but consideration is now being given to relocating elsewhere outside Georgetown.

"We did not expect lawyers from the plazas to compete with us," Mr. Howie said. "Nor did we expect the 160-member business association to object."

ASSURED COUNCIL
Mrs. Howie assured council that they will be appealing the Committee's decision, but challenged the initial reasons for that decision. Additional traffic emanating from the company's parking lot, she contended, would not cause problems.

Mrs. Howie also told council that she is "wondering if we got a fair trial or not," before the Committee, since she had learned that Committee member Rick West, is also vice-chairman of the Business and Professional Association.

Mr. West who attended the council meeting, told The Herald later, however, that he resigned from the Association prior to the Jan. 31 Committee meeting.

Coun. Booth explained that council could either support the Howie's appeal before the OMB, lodge its own appeal or simply receive and file their presentation. He advised the couple that legal representation is not a requirement in

their OMB appeal, and thus no expenses need to be incurred. Coun. Marilyn Serjeantson claimed she saw the wisdom in the Committee's decision and commented that there are already too many commercial operations along Highway 7 and other roads where industrially-zoned land predominates. She agreed that the Howie's case is different, however, and called it a "shame" that they had been put through hardship.

Survival course

A demonstration of survival techniques and a survival shelter will be presented by Bill Garrard on February 10 and 11 at Terra Cotta Conservation Area. The Conservation Area is located five miles west of Highway 10 at Victoria, north of Brampton.

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Fiery meeting over plaza plan

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ply complying with Mr. Sprackman's request to be kept informed of council's ongoing considerations of his proposal. Without being listed as a delegation on the evening's agenda, Coun. Booth explained, no one can address council without the express authorization of a majority of members.

On instruction from the acting mayor, Mr. Richardson moved to escort Mr. Joseph from the room. Amid charges that the BIA is in fact unable to commission such a market study, the consultant finally agreed to resume his seat.

COMMITMENT MADE
Council members were unanimous in their condemnation of Mr. Joseph's behavior, but admitted that a commitment had been made for a specific hearing date.

Saying she was "really upset" by the consultants' comments, Coun. Marilyn Serjeantson told Mr. Joseph that, but for his conduct, she would have been "most happy" to endorse his request to address council and thus have council vote on the request.

Coun. Booth added that he was "extremely annoyed" by the outbursts, but advised coun-

cil against changing the date for the public meeting "at the eleventh hour."

Coun. Mike Armstrong pointed out that the public hearing may not produce an immediate decision and suggested that the planning board could reserve its judgement until the BIA's market study has been completed and the town planning department's review of the proposal is finished.

Noting that the town's concern is primarily over the plaza's proposed location, rather than public need, Coun. Walter Biehn asserted that shoppers in any municipality would welcome new stores and plazas without regard to other factors. Ward 1 Coun. Ross Knechtel added that it is council's "duty" to develop a "total plan for the community that is viable and reasonable."

In a recorded vote, councillors Maltby and Levy were the sole supports of the motion to postpone the hearing. Voting in favor were councillors Booth, Serjeantson, Armstrong, Biehn, Knechtel, Russ Miller and John McDonald. Mayor Pete Pomeroy and Councillors Les Duby, Ed Wood and Pat Patterson were absent.

Town funds requested

A request by the Georgetown Agricultural Society for financial assistance from the town in paying for \$1,200 worth of poles and lighting installed last year has been referred by council to the town's 1979 budget committee. Society secretary Garfield McGilvray explained in a letter to council that a Wintario grant expected to cover the costs has not materialized. He pointed out that the equipment installed at Fairgrounds Park last year can be used by other local groups in need of electrical outlets for their outdoor activities and asked council to assist the Society in its ongoing efforts to give the town "at least one big day in the year."

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