

Town likely to re-open walkway to resolve neighbourhood dispute

By PAUL DORSEY
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A neighborhood property dispute in the Summit Lane-Mountainview Road area of Georgetown has resulted in a recommendation to town council that would see a ten-foot wide easement re-opened for public use as a walkway.

Members of the town's general committee conceded Monday night that a previous council inadvertently made a mistake by leasing a 10-foot by 200-foot easement between Summit Lane and Mountainview Road to Summit Lane homeowner Klaus Hentschel and thus cutting off a much-used access walkway from several abutting neighbors.

The committee recommended, as a result, that council should revoke the lease so that the easement again becomes a public walkway. Halton Hills' three fence viewers will be summoned to the site, if the recommendation is accepted next week, to determine the best location for a new fence that will define the limits of the walkway.

REVOKE LEASE

Mr. Hentschel told the committee that his lease on the easement, acquired soon after he settled on Summit Lane in 1975, has brought "constant problems" in the form of trespassers and vandals. Traffic across his property, both pedestrian and vehicular, in-

creased last year when Focal Properties Ltd. erected a fence around its nearby land, prompting even more local residents to seek alternative routes through the neighborhood, he said.

Despite the erection and repairing of fences along his property line, Mr. Hentschel complained, pedestrians and snowmobilers continued to use the easement and damage property. After an angry confrontation with one neighbor whose children he believed to be among the trespassers, Mr. Hentschel said he "found out the hard way that the grass isn't always greener on the other side of the fence".

The homeowner explained that his family simply wants privacy and appealed to the committee to fence the easement off if it is really intended to be a public walkway.

REGULAR USE

Marty Hughes of Dandridge Crescent informed the committee that the easement has been regularly used by residents of the neighborhood as an access route to the Silver Creek ravine and Mountainview Road even since the Dandridge homes were built in 1969. Summit Lane, he recalled, was a popular ski slope prior to its development in recent years.

Mr. Hughes explained that one side of the walkway was delineated several years ago when several Dandridge Crescent neighbors erected fences behind their homes. His own home, he said, featured a garden gate that connected the walkway with a 42-foot by 10-foot strip of land which he purchased specifically so his family could have access to the walkway.

"I suggest to you that council should revoke (Mr. Hentschel's) lease so we can all return to being the friendly neighborhood we once were," Mr. Hughes said.

Mr. Hughes' words were echoed by his Dandridge Crescent neighbor, Lynn Gillies, who told the committee that her own property is not fenced off. Pedestrians cross her property frequently, she said, but have yet to create any problems.

FEEL STRONGLY

"I think council has made a mistake, but not through any

fault of its own," Coun. Harry Levy commented. "Rather than penalize one party or the other for the mistake we made, though, I think this council should stand up and promise to provide a public access to both Mountainview and the ravine".

Coun. Marilyn Serjeantson agreed, adding a request that the town engineering report investigate the need for and feasibility of installing posts at each end of the walkway to block access to snowmobiles and motorcycles.

Coun. Walter Biehn suggested

that the town may not be obliged to finance the fencing of the walkway and that the involvement of the town's fence viewers, who are called upon to arbitrate occasional boundary and fencing disputes, may be "a needless complication".

"There's no question about it," Mayor Pete Pomeroy said. "Council made a mistake, primarily because of insufficient information, but this recommendation takes care of all the concerns, including those of Mr. Hentschel, who said he's just looking for privacy".

BUSINESS CARD USED FOR HOME ACCESS

A man gained access to a home in Georgetown by showing a business card to two sons of the family, who were at home alone February 12.

The man presented a business card to the two boys, who let him enter the house. He walked around the house asking questions, and took measurements at the rear of the house, then left in a blue Plymouth duster.

The man was a negro, about 5'10" in height, aged approximately 30, and had a thin build, with black, wavy ear-length hair. He was wearing a green top coat, brown pants and a brown suede shoes.

Police are continuing their investigation.

Builder may drop region HQ suit

The threat of legal action being taken against Halton regional council over its decision to withhold payment on the construction of the new regional headquarters until deficiencies are corrected appears to have been lifted.

Chief administrative officer Ernie Reid told The Herald following last Wednesday's council meeting that the contractor who supervised the construction of the \$2.7 million headquarters on Highway 25 in Oakville, Newtown Construction Ltd., seems to be agreeable toward council's intention to withhold \$70,000 of its bill for the project.

Council voted Wednesday to concur with the recommendation of its administration and finance committee and withhold \$20,000 with respect to work held up due to late delivery of glazed windows for the council chamber and \$50,000 to cover some 40 minor

structural deficiencies remaining from the work.

Having already been paid approximately \$312,000, Newtown will be paid the balance of its contract upon completion of the work to the satisfaction of the council and the project's architectural firm, Shore, Tilbe, Hentschel, Irwin and Peters.

The various deficiencies, some of which have caused temperature and plumbing problems that recently hampered the daily business of the regional headquarters were identified during an inspection tour of the building by council members.

Mr. Reid predicted that most of the deficiencies will be corrected during the next few weeks, but noted that several problems outside the building must wait for warmer temperatures this spring before work can be undertaken.

Newtown had written to the region previously threatening legal action unless payment for the project was released. The company contended that the cost of rectifying the deficiencies was not reflected by the \$45,000 figure suggested for withholding by the architects or the \$70,000 figure set by the region.

Busy guards may get increase

The town's general committee has recommended that school crossing guards who are stationed at busier locations in town should receive an extra \$40 a month, effective next September.

If the recommendation is accepted next week by council, crossing guards at stations where more than one school is being serviced and those whose work requires additional hours on the job will receive remuneration amounting to \$240 per month.

Guards whose stations require less than standard service however, would be paid less, lowering their wages to \$120 a month.

COMMITTEE REPORT

In a report to the committee, clerk-administrator Ken Richardson explained that standard service is considered to be two and a half hours a day, for which guards receive \$200 a month. He noted, though, that four stations in two serve more than one school, so that the guards stationed there must serve an extra half-hour a day.

"In addition, as the result of the extra schools served, a minimum of six professional development days require service over the normal station," Mr. Richardson said. "There is also one station which received the same remuneration, however, no service is required during the noon period."

In making its recommendation to council, the committee agreed that guards currently employed by the town should receive no reduction in pay. Any guards to be newly hired for work next September at the lower-service stations, however, would be paid only \$120 a month.

Coun. Mike Armstrong expressed concern over any action that might make council appear to be acting as "union representatives" for the crossing guards.

USEFUL PURPOSE

"They serve a very useful purpose," he acknowledged. "I don't believe they're paid too much but I think it's adequate. Sure it's a matter of protecting our children, but I don't think we should be getting into the business of organizing them."

Coun. Marilyn Serjeantson agreed that the guard's duties do not represent a full-time job, but pointed out that they are a full-time commitment that leaves little time in the day for other activities.

Mr. Richardson noted that there has never been an abundance of applicants for the crossing guards' posts and recalled that recently the town was forced to hire Halton regional policemen to act as crossing guards at some locations because three were no stand-by guards available.

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