

Foodlands owners want to expand store

The owners of adjacent commercial and industrial properties in downtown Acton have presented a major proposal to the town planning board which would see a new 12,000-square-foot Foodlands grocery store and another 10,000 square feet of additional retail space developed in a two-block area.

The Lumsden brothers, who own the existing 7,000 square foot Foodlands outlet on Mill Street near Fellows Street, and Art Gordon, who owns the industrial plant on nearby Eastern Avenue which housed the former Force Electric company, have pooled ideas

and come up with a major development scheme that would see Fellows Street closed as a municipal road and decided to the developers to make room for a new, larger Foodlands store.

Spokesman Ron Burnett told the board last Tuesday night that the two block area bounded by Eastern, Mill, Wilbur and Church Streets would be redeveloped with some 22,000 square feet of retail space on the eastern half and provisions made on the western half for a park-like open area at the rear of the existing Canadian Tire store.

The proposal was referred to the planning department for a report.

Upon completion of the new, 12,000-square foot Foodlands outlet at the corner of Church and Eastern, he said, the old outlet would be converted for alternate commercial uses which would be "connected" to the new store by a landscaped walkway.

Another 3,000 square feet of "ancillary" retail space would be built alongside the new Foodlands store where Fellows Street now extends, while the Mill Street end of Fellows would become a customers' entrance to the proposed parking lot proposed for the corner of Mill and Eastern.

Provisions have also been

made, Mr. Burnett added, for the future expansion of the Canadian Tire outlet if the need arises. The area behind the outlet would remain vacant, he said, with a landscaping screen erected along Church and Wilbur Streets.

Two private homes on Church Street are caught up in the proposal, Mr. Burnett pointed out. Although the possibility of purchasing homes is still being pursued, plans are also being considered to provide one of the home owners with access to his double garage at the rear of the house.

Mr. Burnett explained that the developers are seeking a zoning bylaw and official plan amendments to redesignate the industrial land occupied by the Force Electric plant for

commercial use. In addition, they want the town to close Fellows Street and dedicate it to them, in return for which they would relocate municipal services.

VERY INTERESTED
 Informed that the board of management for Acton's Business Improvement Area is

"very interested" in seeing the project proceed, Coun. Russ Miller became the first of several members to praise the proposal.

"Let's get this thing going," Coun. George Malby agreed. "Let's give them all the encouragement they need. I feel in a relatively short time,

(the developers) will be able to acquire the two residences and then develop the whole block. This is what we stopped the (Landown shopping plaza proposal) for."

Coun. Ross Knechtel similarly commended the developers on a concept which he said was "quite well done."

Twin drive-in may be built near Hornby

A proposal to build a twin-screen, 1,000-car drive-in cinema near Hornby received a generally warm response from the town planning board last Tuesday night, although a final decision depends on the outcome of a staff report requested by the board.

A light-hearted atmosphere greeted John Scott, who with M.S. Peacock and D. Barranger, has applied for official plan and zoning bylaw amendments that would enable him to build the theatre near the intersection of the Sixth Line and Steeles Avenue.

The 27-acre site under consideration is "more than we need", Mr. Scott commented, but is currently zoned for agricultural use, whereas a commercial designation is needed.

The size of the site will, in fact, enable the developers to provide ample space for traffic control and buffering, with a large area in front of the ticket booths proposed for funneling

incoming and outgoing vehicles onto Steeles Avenue. In addition, Mr. Scott said, there is plenty of room for the adjacent Hornby ballpark to expand if necessary.

NO COMPLAINTS
 Mr. Scott assured the board that Highway 401 nearby will neither cause problems because of the sound of passing traffic nor draw complaints because of the headlights of cars in the drive-in or the screen image itself. Existing legislation precludes drive-in screens from facing a major highway, he explained.

Board members who raised individual concerns were also assured that the drive-in's customers would have no serious effect upon other traffic at the Steeles Avenue-Trafalgar Road intersection.

which Coun. Harry Levy called one of the busiest in the area. Mr. Scott pointed out that arrival and departure times at the drive-in would not coincide with rush hours.

NEGATIVE VERDICT
 Recalling the town's negative verdict on a drive-in scheme proposed for the Ashgrove area several years ago, Coun. Levy told Mr. Scott he would be "surprised at the number of complaints" the town receives about heavy traffic along "secondary roads".

Coun. Russ Miller was informed that a neighboring homeowner whose property would be sandwiched between the drive-in and the ballpark has not yet been approached. Mr. Scott said he was unaware whether there would be any problems in that regard.

Mr. Scott also told Coun. Pat Patterson that there would be no problem with the bright floodlights in the ballpark. Trees would be planted around the theatre along with a chain-link fence, he added.

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