

# Nursery loses in rent hike appeal

Halton Hills council has approved rent increases for town-owned facilities proposed by recreation director Glen Gray in spite of opposition from some of the groups affected by the increase.

Red Cross president Tina Yaremey will be attending the general committee meeting next Monday night to talk to council about the rent increase and the affect it will have on the Red Cross. She said in a letter to council last week that the Red Cross would have to reduce its community service if the rent were to be increased.

Coun. Ed Wood said at council Monday night he thinks council has dealt with the issue realistically and that the town's costs are going up just like everyone else's. He said the indications are that the town is running an inefficient shop.

Coun. Wood said the letter from Brian Anderson, who appeared before council on behalf of the Maple Avenue Nursery School, points out an inequity, in that the Credit Valley Artisans (CVA) are paying \$200 a year for the use of the cottage, and he suggested that the town might want to look at charging on a per-square-foot basis.

**GROUPS EQUIPMENT**  
Clerk-administrator Ken Richardson said he had spoken to Mr. Gray, who had told him the town has always given a grant of \$200 to the Credit Valley Artisans, and that the group's equipment would become the property of the town if the group disbanded.

Coun. Harry Levy said the CVA doesn't get a rent subsidy as such, the difference being that the artisans' use of the building is occasional, rather than daily, and the group performs a service to the town. It was never intended that the grant would replace the rent, he said.

Coun. Marilyn Serjeantson said she believes the rent is too high if the nursery which operates as a co-operative, is going to start showing a deficit and a decline in enrollment. The town depends on operations like the co-operatives, she said.

Mr. Anderson said that while the nursery school doesn't begrudge the CVA its subsidy, the parents feel the recreation department is giving preference to recreation activities.

The Herald spoke with Mr. Anderson and with Joe Poirier, chairman of the Legion sponsoring committee for the Air Cadets, which also rents space in Cedarvale, before Monday's meeting about the activities of their organizations and the affect the rent increase will have on their programs.

Mr. Poirier is chairman of the air cadets' sponsoring committee, which raises the funds needed to run the organization. The committee is made up of seven or eight volunteers who run dances, a 50-50 draw, and other fundraising activities to raise the \$5,000 necessary to run the program each year. The cadets have tag days, and they used to sell hot dogs and hamburgers at fairs and other events to raise money. But for the past two or three years, their booth has lost money, Mr. Poirier said, so the program was dropped.

Mr. Poirier said the committee has also had problems with the Liquor Control Board of Ontario with the dances they run, and raising funds for the cadets is becoming increasingly difficult.

**REVISED RATES**  
Mr. Poirier said the town has already revised the rates for the air cadets' rental of facilities at Cedarvale. He estimates the September increase will run to an extra \$160 a year on top of the \$840 in rent the group pays now. The cadets are also paying rent of \$150 a year to a private group for the use of the rifle range in Limehouse.

The cadets use five rooms in Cedarvale Community Centre, but Mr. Poirier said they don't have enough space, and they haven't got room for any more cadets. The group has had to cut down band practice to two nights a month, instead of once a week, because the group can't afford to rent the hall every Wednesday evening, he said. The cadets must have the space on Monday nights for instruction and drill, Mr. Poirier said, but the group may try to find another location for their band practices.

Mr. Poirier said it used to cost the cadets \$5 a month to hold their band practice in a church basement, and they may look for that kind of arrangement again.

"I think the town has to have more consideration for the cadets and what they've done for the town," Mr. Poirier said. "We've kept the kids off the streets and given them something to do."

The army cadets have the armory and they don't have to pay anything," he pointed out. "We have to pay rent. It's going too far. If it goes on, we'll have to fold, because we can't afford it."

Mr. Anderson said it was unfortunate timing which was responsible for the request by the Maple Nursery School for a reduction in rent coming in at the same time as a rent increase proposed by the town recreation department.

"If anything, what we want to stress is that we felt we're being considered a recreational activity, that is, luxury, and we're providing a service not provided by the town," Mr. Anderson said.

**RATE CRITICAL**  
He said the rental rate is critical to the nursery school because it is a fixed sum. Even if the school laid off one of its teachers and reduced the size of its classes, it wouldn't change the cost of the rent, he said.

The enrollment has already dropped this year, a fact which Mr. Anderson attributes mainly to the increase in the school's fees to \$42 from \$37. If the rent increase is approved, that would mean an increase in the fees to \$45 a month.

"That first rent increase just seemed to be the line for some people," Mr. Anderson said. He added that while there are about 500 children in the area who are eligible to attend the school, raising the rent, and therefore raising the fees, would limit the service the school can offer.

The nursery school operates as a co-operative, with parents assisting in the daily operation of the school, from helping during the day, to providing the children's snacks by turn, and helping them make or repair equipment.

Mr. Anderson said the school is facing increasing costs because of a slight decline in the number of students, and also because of changes in the law governing the operation of nursery schools and day care

centres. The changes have been with regard to the standard of food provided, and the school has had to bear the increased costs involved in raising the standard, which cover the nutritional value of the food.

Another factor in the school's financial situation is the fact that last year they had a Wintario grant of \$750 which they were able to use for equipment for the school.

Mr. Anderson said he didn't like the implication that councilors believe the nursery school operates as a day care centre. He pointed out that the program for each child is only a half-day, and it is the parent's responsibility to make sure the child gets to school and home again each day. He said most of the mothers solve the problem by setting up car pools.

**TAKE CHILD**  
"If you wanted to use Maple Nursery School as a day care

centre, you'd have to have somebody taking your child there and picking him or her up again, and looking after the child for the period of the day away from the school," Mr. Anderson said.

Mr. Anderson mentioned in a letter to council that the school has a problem in the winter time because the heat is so high that the teachers have to open the windows to maintain a comfortable temperature. He suggested that if this waste of heat was stopped, the town would save the money it is trying to recoup with the increase in rent.

The parents who participate in Maple Nursery School often have older children who participate in other recreation department activities, and while they may not like increases in the cost of these programs, they expect to pay for them because the programs are for special interest groups like hockey and soccer, Mr. Anderson said.

Most of the recreation programs in town are geared to children five and up, he pointed out, while the children attending the nursery school are three and four years of age.

"We feel we're serving a segment of the population which isn't receiving any other service," he said.

Mr. Anderson said in discussions with people from the recreation department, he has been given hints that the town would have no trouble renting

the facilities at Cedarvale, even at the increased rent of \$212 a month.

Coun. Russ Miller said at the council meeting that Mr. Gray had told him the town could get more money for the use of the facilities from other groups who would like to rent the premises. Coun. Miller indicated he supports the user-pay concept in town facilities.

Council approved the rent increases for town facilities, and received and filed Mr. Anderson's letter.

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