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Mayor's motion criticized as concession to builders

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McLaughlin's optimism. Coun. Levy reported this week, the DBRS, a bond rating system, had reinstated a high-level rating on all series of Focal's secured debentures, which had previously been suspended.

NO SMOKE
"At that meeting, I suggested there could be no smoke without fire, yet no one around or in this council chamber would admit there had been private meetings with McLaughlin," Coun. Levy recalled. "In fact, the mayor emphatically denied it. Now, we discover that such meetings had been held. This council had been misled and made to look like a bunch of idiots. This action was totally wrong and inexcusable as far as the credibility of council was concerned."

Mayor Pomeroy called Coun. Levy's charges "a lie," but conceded that he initially refrained from informing council about his informal meetings with developers. The information was soon after

offered without prompting, however, and councillors were plainly told that private meetings with developers occur "almost every day," the mayor said.

"I don't like accusations that are untrue," Mayor Pomeroy told Coun. Levy, explaining further that reports of Mr. McLaughlin's speech to investors appeared some four months prior to the August meeting.

"But the DBRS rating came out later," Coun. Levy replied. "I don't think you're right," Mayor Pomeroy maintained. "Secret meetings, my ass."

"I can't share the same negative opinion as my fellow councillor from Ward 4," Coun. Armstrong said in the mayor's defence. "The mayor's motion deals in logic, and it's something we probably should have passed five years ago. I can find no indication in this motion that we're going to develop with Focal, Paramount (Developments Ltd., which also has land interests south of the community) or anyone else."

"And, I cannot fall for (Coun. Levy's) fluff about 'opening the floodgates'. That's absolute nonsense."

Coun. Booth challenged Coun. Levy's contention that Halton Hills taxpayers would be hard-pressed to bear "the increased yearly operating costs" generated by the Focal subdivision. He pointed out that Halton region picks up the bill for all but 19 per cent of the costs for policing, road maintenance, and social services.

If council fails to approve Mayor Pomeroy's motion, Coun. Booth warned, Focal has a prime opportunity to appeal the official plan's rural designation of its land before the Ontario Municipal Board.

Coun. Patterson was another supporter of the mayor's motion.

"I'm disappointed, and I resent Coun. Levy's inept accusations of me as a councillor," he said. "If I were in my right mind, I'd demand an apology. Anybody can get up and condemn us, but let's face reality and be business people. I've got taxpayers in Ward 2 ready to go on relief."

"The whole character and future of the town is at stake if we show these lands as being available for development," Coun. Serjeantson argued.

"I don't agree entirely with Coun. Levy," Coun. McDonald commented, "but this motion appears to be a step in the developer's direction."

"We're not voting on the development," Coun. Maltby said. "We're just making sure we've got our boxing gloves screwed on right before we start slugging it out."

COURAGEOUS
Coun. Maltby called the mayor's motion "the most courageous step that's taken place here since this town was formed."

Coun. Knechtel assured detractors that the motion was not a "proposal of marriage" to Focal, nor even a request for

a "date," but perhaps could be likened to a preliminary "tele phone conversation".

After repeating his opinion that development should extend south from Georgetown toward the major transportation corridors and claiming to have rejected "numerous" inquiries from interested industrialists for lack of serviced land, Mayor Pomeroy apologized for becoming overly emotional in the matter and took a brief moment to regain his composure.

"Every time we talk about development, someone gets accused of being in the developer's pocket," he told council. "I don't want this town to be forced into another municipal board hearing every time it wants some development, but I assure you, it's the courts and municipal board for us every time from now on if this motion doesn't pass. Please, let's move ahead."

Preceding Lawrie Duggan to the speaker's podium at Monday night's meeting was Norval area farmer Peter Branch, who said he supports "logical, phased, controlled growth" regardless of location. Any form of development, he conceded, creates many problems, but at the same time creates more job opportunities, more revenue, more public services and amenities and "more chances for young people and entrepreneurs."

Mr. Branch pointed out that there are alternatives which could circumvent the sewage treatment deficiencies stalling many local development proposals. While many types of industries need no municipal treatment capacity and would thus tax existing facilities no further, he said, servicing options for others may be available through the help of neighboring municipalities.

MAJOR INTEREST
The need for more industry, a major factor behind Mayor Pomeroy's motion, is offset to

a great extent in Halton Hills by the abundance of farming operations, Mr. Branch said. Agriculture is a major interest here, requires no sewage treatment capacity, lowers taxes and generally benefits the lifestyles of all citizens, he contended.

Representing a two-year old organization of 500 Georgetown area ratepayers, Mr. Duggan cited the citizen's right to stipulate in which direction the community should grow. He recounted findings of two consultants' studies which concluded that Georgetown has a finite capacity to grow to a population equivalent of 30,000, a figure which would be drastically multiplied by the development of lands outside the community's urban area.

"We're really not interested in the type of development you see in Brampton and Brantford," Mr. Duggan said. "The deferral of a designation for these lands (south of Silver Creek) seems to suggest a change of stance on council's part."

Mayor Pomeroy assured Mr. Duggan he was not suggesting "the rules be changed" with regard to council's earlier decision giving top priority in the allocation of sewage treatment capacity to "m-filling" type developments aimed at closing in vacant zones within the urban areas.



INAUGURAL RUN

Rick West, Coun. Walter Blehn (representing Mayor Pete Pomeroy as well as the Chamber of Commerce), Murray Inglis and Chamber chairman Bill Crawford were up bright and early Thursday morning to send the Chamber's Christmas bus off on its first run. The bus will be running Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from now until Christmas to provide senior citizens and people without cars the opportunity to get to the stores to do their Christmas shopping. (Herald photo)

Rest home plan worries council

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Having commented at the board meeting that "the proposal, quite frankly, worries me a lot," Mayor Pomeroy followed up this week by likening the rest home to a "motel for the elderly."

"I apologize to the gentlemen involved about how long all this has taken," the mayor said.

"I feel this rest home is on the low end of the social scale, for people who haven't the money to go anywhere else. It affords them protection to the point where they become a liability on our social services."

ROOM SIZES
Coun. Serjeantson added criticism of the proposed room sizes for residents of the rest home, commenting that there appeared to have been "little consideration" given to the wishes and comfort of occupants.

Noting that he had not seen the Health Council's com-

ments prior to Monday's meeting, Mr. Paulson, recalled that earlier remarks by the Council included no objections to the proposal. Regardless, he said, the ministry of health, which has endorsed the project, "is way beyond these different levels of government and much superior to any Health Council."

"For you to lay a bomb on me tonight - to kill this thing now - I just don't understand," he said. "That's not democracy."

Mr. Paulson added that another southern Ontario municipality was at that moment approving "identical" plans for the conversion of a similar old building into a rest home, only five weeks after the proposal was first unveiled. Halton Hills, he complained, has taken all year to decide against the proposal.

"I'd like an opportunity to discuss this informally with the town and hash this thing out," he said. "All this is doing is putting an old school to use."

Hydro corridor battle may end for town

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mental authorities."

Mr. Kropf pointed out, though, that the undertaking "would not necessarily oblige Hydro to agree with the agencies consulted," since it has carte blanche authority to proceed with the corridor as it sees fit because of the recent Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) ruling.

WON'T COMMIT

The lengthy OMB hearing into the corridor proposal was one of several forums in which the ICG complained that Hydro could rarely if ever be persuaded to commit itself in writing to certain concessions to landowners, particularly in the area of fencing the corridor route. The ICG's clear message to the OMB and others was that Hydro cannot be trusted.

The town's apparent readiness to let the corridor complete its crossing from the Bruce Peninsula to the Milton switching station is largely a result of the Supreme Court of Ontario's September 25 ruling. That ruling upheld the authori-

ty of the OMB to adjudicate the dispute between Hydro and its opponents, which it did earlier this year in Hydro's favor.

"The situation has been discussed with the town solicitor and the clerk-administrator," Mr. Kropf reported, "and it is my opinion that it would serve no practical purpose to delay any further in complying with the decision of the OMB

(ordering the town to make the necessary amendments for the corridor)."

Coun. Russ Miller, long an outspoken supporter of the ICG, asked planning director Mario Venditti whether a private citizen seeking official plan amendments could expect the same courtesy Hydro is receiving through its "written undertaking."

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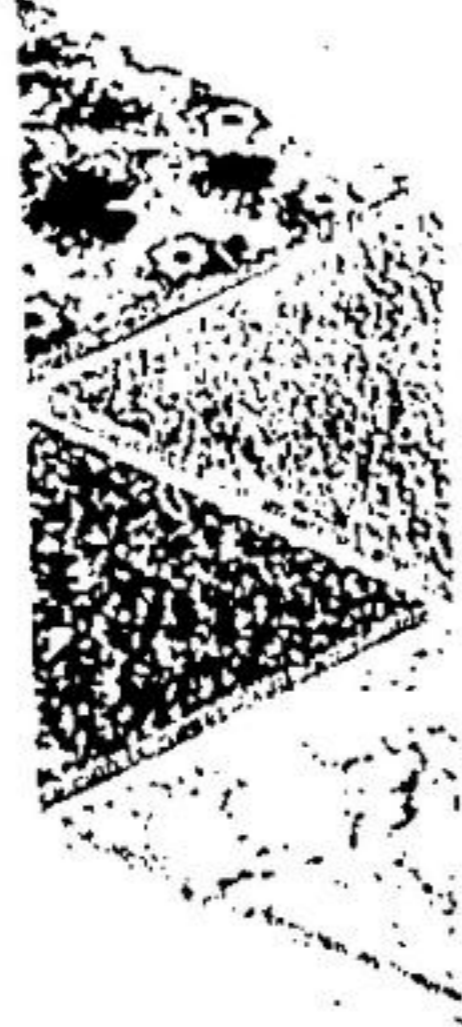
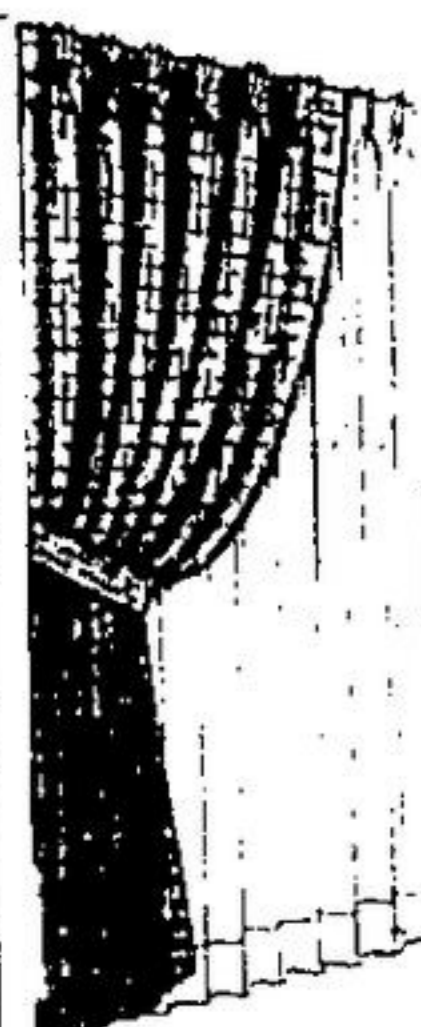


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