

St. Joseph's school parents consider their alternatives

By MAGGIE HANNAH
Herald Special

A number of strategies are open to parents of the 225 pupils at Acton's St. Joseph's separate school, who are reluctant to send their children back to the school in September.

Mike McMahon, spokesman for the school parents' association, said the Halton separate school board decision July 29 to table discussion to fund a new facility for Acton has convinced parents the board doesn't care about them.

Several parents are discussing re-enrolling their children in public schools, which would kill the present separate school. Parents withdrew their children from public schools in 1977 to form the first separate school in the area.

Other families suggest simply boycotting the school by withdrawing their children and keeping them home.

A boycott is a double-edged sword, Mr. McMahon said, and would involve the ministry immediately since all children are required by law to attend an education facility after the age of seven.

Parents in Penetang and Etobicoke used such a method to secure funding for new schools, he said.

A third alternative would involve upgrading the present facility, now housed in a century-old stone building leased from the Halton board of education, and bringing it up to health and safety standards, he said.

Overflowing toilets are a frequent problem and numerous faults were found in the building because it was built before modern fire safety standards were in force, he said.

Among the unsatisfactory aspects of the school listed in the Halton Hills fire department inspection report are:

- an open stairway from the ground floor to the second floor;
- no fire exposure protection

for the unenclosed fire escape;

- a non-fire-rated ceiling in the basement furnace room;
- storage facilities encroaching on all exits;
- no emergency lighting;
- exit lights not on emergency power;
- less than desirable second floor access to the exterior fire escape;
- and possible improper installation of the fire alarm system.

A final alternative is the possibility of suing the board for breach of promise, Mr. McMahon said. Parents have well-documented evidence including a letter from the board, promising them they would get their school because they were the board's number one priority.

Now they discover, after the ministry of education approved funding for a 500-pupil school in Oakville this spring, that there are two number one priorities and they believe the board's statements border on misrepresentation.

"It isn't so much the fact we didn't get the money as it is the fact that the board misled us that ranks," Mr. McMahon said.

But he does have reservations about using the pupils as pawns. "We don't know the impact this will have on their future," he said.

"How do I tell my kids in September they can't go to school because we are mad at the school board?"

The action of the board, and the confusion surrounding the

various procedural ploys used by trustees to table the motion on Acton's funding has left a sour taste among parents.

"It looked as if the tabling motion was a procedural ploy they found to defuse us," Mr. McMahon said.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF HALTON

PUBLIC NOTICE

TO RECONSTRUCT AND ALTER REGIONAL ROAD NO. 3 (Trafalgar Road) FROM MAPLE AVENUE, NORTH OF HIGHWAY 7, HALTON HILLS

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Sections 443 and 446 of The Municipal Act, being Chapter 284 of the Revised Statutes of Ontario 1970, that the Council of The Regional Municipality of Halton, at its meeting to be held in the Regional Administration Building, 1151 Bronte Road, Oakville, Ontario at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 17, 1988, to pass a by-law to alter, widen and reconstruct Regional Road No. 3 (Trafalgar Road) from Maple Avenue, North of Highway 7, Halton Hills.

A plan showing the lands required for this project and the proposed by-law may be seen in the Regional Public Works Department Offices, 1151 Bronte Road, Oakville, Ontario.

On Wednesday, September 10, 1988 at 9:00 a.m., Regional Council, by its Public Works Committee, will hear in person or by his Counsel any person who claims that his lands will be prejudicially affected by the said by-law and who appears to be heard. Any such person who wishes to be heard should, as soon as possible, make application to:

Mr. Garfield Brown,
Regional Clerk,
The Regional Municipality of Halton,
1151 Bronte Road, P.O. Box 7000,
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