

Outlook on Halton Hills

Concerns over why doctor's privileges were removed

Looking for a forum in which to air their concerns over how the Georgetown District Memorial Hospital revoked Dr. Jack Ford's hospital privileges, over 70 men and women crowded into the town coun-

cil chambers Monday night. "It's something we feel very strongly about and we felt this was the place to come tonight to voice our concerns," Jennifer Alton of Georgetown said. "Many of us are

expectant mothers and fathers. We feel we have a right to know why our doctor's hospital privileges were withdrawn. The hospital board's press statement doesn't answer that question.

It only says Dr. Ford's privileges were removed by a unanimous decision of the Board of directors. The hospital's executive director Mark Hochan says the Board cannot comment on the decision because it could jeopardize its legal case at an upcoming Ontario Hospital Appeal Board hearing. The hearing is anticipated to take place in the fall.

She questioned why the Ontario Hospital Appeal Board hearing isn't sooner than the fall, if the matter has to do with public health and safety, as she was told by the hospital.

"Let's not smear the man and his practice. If you have proof, say it. They're saying, 'If you knew what we knew,'" Mrs. Alton said.

Mrs. Alton says she is not just trying to rally support for Dr. Ford, the obstetrician who delivered her three children.

"I'm opposed to the method, the way in which it was done, and the secrecy," she told *The Herald*. "I'd be more than willing and open to listen to the other side and then make a decision."

She said the expectant women who came out to Monday night's council meeting are torn.

"They're saying, should we be going to him? Tell us why," Mrs. Alton said. "He's still got a licence to practice medicine, people are still going to him. If there is a problem, they should tell us. You have to have complete confidence in your doctor, especially when you have your baby."

There should be a statement from the hospital board giving more information, she said.

"They say it's for really good reasons. If I knew them, I might agree with them," Mrs. Alton said. "I just want the truth, and the hospital board is having a hard time giving out any information."

Although there were no answers for Mrs. Alton and the rest of the large delegation at the council meeting, she was satisfied with the public forum. "I think we've accomplished something already. We're putting pressure on the hospital board to open up over there, for the public. It lets them know we're interested in what's going on over there," Mrs. Alton said.

"I pay provincial taxes which fund that hospital, and I feel we have a right to know," she said.

Coun. Pam Sheldon said the delegation should be bringing its concerns to the hospital board, and said council can't deal with a disciplinary matter at the hospital. She also suggested they go to the College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Ministry of Health.

"You put these council members in a very precarious position if we were to discuss this," Coun. Sheldon said.

Two of the three councillors on the hospital board declared a conflict of interest during the discussion.

Mrs. Alton said the delegation is hoping to be at the April 23 hospital board meeting.

Protest group dominates gov't week open house

What was meant to have been a quiet open house for Local Government Week turned into a heated debate over a doctor losing his hospital privileges.

Councillors Marilyn Serjeantson and Al Cook were confronted by over 50 supporters of Dr. Jack Ford at Centennial Public School Wednesday evening.

The hospital board at the Georgetown District Memorial Hospital revoked Dr. Ford's hospital privileges effective April 7.

Protesters expressed dismay that no reasons have been made public for Dr. Ford's dismissal and they're planning to organize a meeting with the hospital board.

Joan Yachon Robson was one of the women who spoke to the councillors. She asked how many members of the board voted at the April 7 meeting. She also wanted to know why Dr. Ford wasn't allowed to sit in on the board meeting or talk

to his peers about the removal of his privileges before the decision was made.

"We want an emergency meeting in two or three days time to have a delegation go before the hospital board of directors on behalf of Dr. Ford," Mrs. Robson said.

If that can't be arranged, Coun. Al Cook has agreed to request a delegation be heard at the April 23 board meeting on behalf of Dr. Ford, said Mrs. Robson.

In the meantime, two different petitions are being circulated. One petition is calling for a more open system for hospital board meetings with regular reports to be received by the town councillors.

Another petition by Mrs. Robson is asking that Dr. Ford's privileges be restored until the Ontario Hospital Appeal Board hearing is underway.

"I've had calls from expectant mothers saying 'what am I going to do - he's the doctor of my choice,'" she said. "You only want to have the baby delivered by the doctor who has been with you through the pregnancy, especially first time mothers," she said.

Mrs. Robson also gathered a list of 90 signatures at the Wednesday meeting of people who will publicly support the doctor. She calls this a "list of public supporters" and not a petition.

Meanwhile, the Hamilton Spectator covered the open house meeting and the Guelph Mercury and Brampton Daily Times have been contacted to make them aware of the controversy.

A meeting of the protest group has been called for Monday at 8 p.m. at the home of Mrs. Robson on 32 Wildwood Road to discuss further strategy.

The Wednesday protest was a last-minute decision spread by word of mouth and the group apparently caught the councillors off-guard.

Crazy boaters raise \$8,000

Eighty-two crazy boats and canoes traversed the flowing waters of the Credit River Saturday in the annual Crazy Boat Race.

Organizer Ron Sullivan said the event has raised over \$8,000 so far and hopes are the race will top the \$10,000 mark.

The Race, sponsored by the Georgetown Lions Club, went off in picture perfect weather as the sun gleamed down on a variety of whacky entries which included a giant spider, a scaled model of a train engine, a First Aid's Kit, a biting alligator and a Banana Split.

But a local entry, aptly named Team Speyside, took top honors for the fastest Crazy Boat down the river to the finish line under the Main Street Bridge.

The Speyside was guided by Gerhard Treviranus, Steve Mokryzki, Rex Freitag and Steve McClure.

Richard Dawling and Jim Sellers won the prize for the fastest canoe down the river.

The War Canoe, piloted by a crew of seven, won the Class C - boats of other types category. Dale Powell,

Judy Praught, Tony LeBlanc, Rob Rossett, Deborah Powell, Bruce Marshall and Jason Angle comprised the crew of the War Canoe.

The prize for the Commercial and Service Club entry went to McDonald-Douglas of Canada

Recreation Club which also topped the field in sponsors bringing in \$1,400. Mike Cowgill, Gary Woods, Martin Newman, Andrew Uveges, Stuart Gourley, Dan Cowgill, Julie Johnston and P. Sandul guided the club's entry.

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