

Halton reverses decision on land severance

Halton Regional councillors reversed a decision last week to approve a land severance for a Milton farmer.

Gino DaRe and his wife Wanda, applied for a severance on their 95-acre lot to resume dairy farming operation that halted in 1983. Mr. DaRe appeared before Regional general committee in April to plead his case, saying he would swear on an affidavit that the land severance for his son's home would not be sold to developers months after the Region's approval.

Mr. DaRe's property at Guelph Line and Sideroad 10 was severed once before to build a church beside his home.

But Regional lawyers say an affidavit would have no binding effect on the DaRes' property and would only act as a vote of con-

fidence.

"After all the discussion we've had about the Land Division Committee... to have this kind of recommendation (to grant a severance) is at the very least surprising and shocking," Burlington Coun. Walter Mulkewich told Regional councillors.

"If this council has any sense of integrity, as far as its official plan goes," the severance should be refused, he said.

The Region's official plan allows a land severance for a "bona fide" farmer to hire farm help to live on the premises. Mr. DaRe presently has employment outside farming, council heard, and his son is studying for a law degree, Coun. Mulkewich said.

But in April a smaller group of Regional councillors heard a

presentation from Mr. DaRe and his representative Fred Cunningham that turned around a staff decision to reject the DaRes' proposed severance. The planning staff had filed a report rejecting the application on the basis of the Regional plan. Regional councillors voted to overturn the staff recommendation.

Halton Hills Coun. Joe Hewitt, who was at the meeting where Mr. DaRe spoke, said this severance should not be decided by logic alone.

He said Regional politicians are "behaving like bureaucrats." "We're being more restrictive than even our planning staff," he said. "Decisions are made on the fairness of the application."

Coun. Hewitt was joined in his opinion by Milton Coun. Bill

Johnson who said the DaRe property "was a viable farm that had a fire (in 1986). That's a fact not a figure."

Mr. DaRe told councillors that after his farm burned his cattle were kept in Stayner, Ontario. He said his 35 head of cattle are "waiting to come home."

But Regional councillors voted 13-9 to reject Mr. DaRe's severance. In the last month there have been three incidents of alleged illegal land severance dealings investigated by Halton Regional Police, councillors said. A Milton man charged with contravening land severance laws pleaded guilty to one charge last week.

Coun. Bill Johnson maintained that Regional council was "no place" for discussing land severances.

Ambulance service seeks volunteers

Halton Hills Coun. Rick Bonnette wants to make summer shorter for some 35 volunteer ambulance attendants.

Coun. Bonnette said last year's attendance for the Acton area was 50 volunteers. This summer there will be less due to 18 members still being in training.

"It's going to be a long summer for the 35 volunteers," Coun. Bonnette said.

A meeting to sign up recruits will be held May 17 at Acton High School at 7:30 p.m. Those who can't attend the meeting can call 877-7772 for information.

Coun. Bonnette is hoping for 20 new recruits.

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