

New housing minister may give life to mayor's housing proposal

By DONNA KELL
Herald Staff

People who can't afford to buy a house in Georgetown or Acton could buy in rural Halton Hills if a plan presented to the provincial government by town mayor Russ Miller gets approval.

Mayor Miller sent a 30-page proposal to the provincial ministry of housing "several years ago." The mayor compiled the report with local realtor Phil Carney. The proposal outlined a plan to build single-family houses outside Halton Hills urban area on half-acre, fully-serviced lots. The houses were to sell for about \$100,000.

But a review of that housing project was delayed over the past months, the mayor said Monday. Former provincial housing minister Chaviva Hosek, whom Mr. Miller spoke with recently, was replaced last summer by housing and municipal affairs minister John Sweeney.

David Blaney, assistant executive assistant to Walt Elliot, MPP for Halton North, said yesterday there were two meetings with senior ministry housing officials and Mr. Elliot. A meeting scheduled for last Friday was cancelled but will be rescheduled, he said.

When asked if the prices would stay within the provincial guidelines which say Halton must provide 25 per cent of new houses at a sale price of less than \$148,000, Mayor Miller said, "I think we could put something together that would fit into that price-range."

Mr. Blaney said the mayor's proposal for affordable housing complies with changes in the ministry of housing and municipal affairs.

"There is a shift in the ministry," Mr. Blaney said. "The minister has said, on several occasions, that he is interested in single

family houses. It fits in with what he has been saying he wants to do."

The houses are an option to the conventional apartments usually seen as housing for low and middle-income families.

Municipalities in Ontario have come to the ministry of housing and municipal affairs with planning ideas that include trailer parks as a form of affordable housing.



Russ Miller

Mr. Blaney said.

But "what the mayor is talking about are real houses with real basements."

"What we're trying to do (in the ministry of housing) is to look at new and innovative solutions. The project that the mayor and Walt (Elliot) are looking at is that type of idea."

A meeting with senior officials from the ministry of housing and Mr. Elliot was cancelled last week, but is expected to be rescheduled.

The MPP executive assistant said the mayor's proposal could be considered by the ministry of housing and municipal affairs, but it would depend on Mr. Sweeney.

Full slate at cultural centre

There is a great slate of performances coming up this fall at the John Elliott Theatre/Cultural Centre for your enjoyment.

A musical presentation - "The Blue Guitar" - by Trevor Burt will be in the Art Gallery at the Cultural Centre on Nov. 5 at 7:30 p.m.

The next major production in the theatre will be "Fiddler on the Roof," presented by Georgetown Globe Productions on Nov. 17 to 19, 23 to 26 and 29 to Dec. 2, at 8 p.m. with Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. Tickets are available from Royal LePage.

The University Women's Club continues with their Super Sunday Series on Dec. 3 with "Cats Getting Ready For Christmas." For ticket information please call 877-8027.

Also in December the

Georgetown Little Theatre presents entertainment for the whole family with their English pantomime production of "Mother Goose" from Dec. 8 to 10. To get tickets for this show call 877-3700.

On Dec. 15 the Centennial choir will present a special Christmas concert for their friends beginning at 8 p.m. Phone 877-6976 for tickets.

In the Art Gallery this fall there will be an exhibit, "The Immortal Spirit," works by Frank Black for Nov. 1 to 19.

For further information on any of these shows or to inquire about renting the theatre or meeting room please call the centre at 877-7915 and ask for Hank.

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Province demands affordable housing

By DONNA KELL
Herald Staff

The quality of housing in Halton could go down when a provincial mandate to build 25 per cent of homes for under \$148,000 goes into effect, Regional councillors said Wednesday.

Halton's planning and public works committee reacted to a mandate from the provincial ministry of housing and the ministry of municipal affairs. Under the new system, builders will be required to supply one-quarter of new houses for under \$148,000 in Halton Hills, Oakville and Milton. Burlington, under a different area assessment, will provide one-quarter of new homes at under \$132,000.

"What are we going to build, shacks?" Halton Hills Coun. Rick Bonnette said in response to the mandate that will be in place in August, 1991.

"I'm all for affordable housing, but I think we have to be realistic."

Regional policy research director Ho Wong said the ministry of housing is asking for "smaller lots" and "more modest housing."

One-quarter of new buildings built in the Region must rent for under \$1,320 a month. "The (provincial) policy statement is in effect now. We could request that any new subdivision coming in is affordable housing," he said.

But the Region will first put a "work program" in place as directed by the provincial housing policy statement passed in July of this year. An outline of the Region's intentions is due today (Nov. 1). There will be a public meeting to change the Region's official plan to accommodate the affordable housing guidelines by August of next year.

"There are going to be some real catastrophic results from this directive," Burlington Coun. Rob Forbes said Wednesday.

"The developers are going to pass it on to the other three-quarters of developments."

The ministry of housing assessed an "affordable" house for the average salary of \$52,700 in each Halton household.

But Regional Chairman Peter Pomeroy said buyers "don't get much of a house" for \$148,000.

"The old Canadian dream of having a house on a lot of 40 or 50 foot size - those days are gone."

Burlington Coun. Pat McLaughlin said what "bothers him most" about the present housing situation is the 25-per-cent

"We're not talking about people in dire straits, people who are traditionally considered poor," Oakville Coun. Liz Behrens said.

"The people who are going to be living in these houses are the professionals."

down payment. "Who the hell has \$35,000 for a down payment," he said, referring to the estimated down payment on an affordable house in Halton.

Under the new provincial legislation, the Region will be forced to provide serviced land for a projected 20 year population growth, vacant land for a 10 year population growth and three years advanced planning for draft approvals for housing projects, Mr. Wong said.

"The biggest problem is the 20-year servicing. We're not doing that."

"All our servicing is basically up to Highway Five" in Oakville and Burlington.

Halton will appeal the designation that puts Burlington outside the assessment area for affordable housing in the rest of Halton. Final approval of this plan will be made at a Nov. 8 Regional council meeting.

Burlington is presently assessed with Hamilton-Wentworth, giving that Halton municipality an affordable housing requirement of 25 per cent of new houses built to sell for under \$132,000.

Under Burlington's present assessment, the average salary is \$46,900 and the rent for 25 per cent of properties built must be under \$1,180 a month.

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