

# Town losing potential tax revenue on unsold homes

The current housing market slow down is the reason why Canada Homes has only been able to sell 12 of the 211 houses that comprise the Canada Homes subdivision in Georgetown South, said a source close to the subdivision development.

"There's no market. They'd love to have sold the homes a long time ago," said the source.

Although several attempts were made to obtain a statement from Canada Homes and its president, Lorne Leibel, no comments could be obtained before press time.

In comparison, all but two homes in the nearby Fernbrook Homes subdivision are currently oc-

cupied, said Fernbrook president, Danny Salvatore. There are 100 houses in the Fernbrook subdivision, he said.

The Herald's source said the difference in sales between the two subdivisions is related to the method each builder used to sell their respective homes. "Fernbrook didn't sell to as many speculators."

Mr. Salvatore agreed this could be the case, saying, "I didn't sell most of my homes to speculators. But I can't say for sure that was the reason," he added.

It was explained to the Herald that Canada Homes had initially sold several of its homes but they were conditional sales. The condi-

tion was that the buyers would close the deal on the new house if they sold their existing home, explained the source. But when the market went soft people couldn't sell their existing homes and there decided not to close the deal on the new home. "The market has been going increasingly soft for the last 12 months," said the Herald informant.

He went on to explain that technically the builder could sue these people but it rarely happens. "But maybe it should," the man suggested.

Mr. Salvatore pre-sold all his homes.

The building director for Halton Hills, Ron Shettell, said the town is hopeful that Canada Homes will be able to sell their houses soon because no one likes a lot of empty homes. As well, the town is losing out on potential tax revenue, he said.

According to a senior accountant with the town, Cor Buikema, if the remaining 199 homes were occupied, the town would have collected \$81,670 in taxes this year. That figure is based on an average assessment of \$5,000 per home, he said. The town has collected

\$37,000 from the occupied homes in the Fernbrook subdivision.

Although the majority of houses in the Canada Homes subdivision remain unsold, this will not hold up the planned Georgetown South Community Park, said the town's Park Superintendent, Bryan Shynal.

The town is developing the park in conjunction with the developer, Halton Hills Village Homes Incorporated, which is in no way tied to Canada Homes, he said.

Mr. Shynal explained that according to the master development agreement signed between the town and Halton Hills Village Homes, the developer is required to upgrade certain parts of the area designated for the park. The town is responsible for building the park, he said. Once the town delivers the plans for the park to the developers, which should be in September, the developers have the next nine months to fulfill their part of the agreement, he said.

## Amendments in works for Planning Act

Amendments to Ontario's Planning Act will be introduced this fall to prevent unapproved lot subdivision through a person's last will and testament. The government intends to stop this abuse immediately. Once legislation is passed, it will be retroactive to July 26, 1990.

"Clearly, this is a step we did not wish to take because the sanctity of wills is traditional," John Sweeney, Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs said.

"However, abuses of the planning and approvals process have made it imperative that we introduce this amendment," he added.

Under current legislation, individuals can divide portions of their land into lots and leave them to their children or other beneficiaries.

However, in recent years, planning and zoning approvals have been bypassed by some investors

who have paid elderly or dying people to re-write their wills subdividing the land into many lots and bequeathing them to the investors.

This land may be inappropriate for residential purposes yet pressure to develop those lots may result.

Abuses have been particularly evident in the Niagara region where there are important areas of specialty farmland.

Under the proposed amendment, landowners will be allowed to bequeath lots to their children or other beneficiaries only if the lots were created with local municipal approval.

If an existing will calls for property to be subdivided, the beneficiaries will jointly own the land until it is either sold as one parcel and the profits divided, or the necessary subdivision approvals are obtained.

## Halton Housing Authority names Hebb to top post

Mrs. Louise Hebb of Burlington has been appointed chairman of the Halton Housing Authority, John Sweeney, Minister of Housing, announced.

Mrs. Hebb has served on the seven-member authority since March, 1988. The authority manages Ontario Housing Corporation's 1,065 assisted housing units in Burlington, Halton Hills, Milton and Oakville.

The federal, provincial and municipal governments nominate individuals for appointment to the housing authorities by provincial orders-in-council. The province appoints the housing authority chairman.

The day-to-day management of OHC's 84,000 housing units is carried out by local housing authorities, although the primary responsibility for assisted housing remains with OHC.

Mr. Sweeney paid tribute to the efforts of volunteers such as Mrs. Hebb, who serve on local housing authorities, helping to ensure that Ontario's public housing program is responding well to the needs of the many people it serves.

The Halton Housing Authority provides accommodation for all types of households, including families, single persons, seniors, childless couples and people with disabilities.

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## Ambulance service receives money

The Halton-Mississauga Ambulance Service will receive \$413,000 to hire eight attendants for its new station to serve the residential expansion in northern Mississauga, Health Minister Elinor Caplan announced.

"This government is committed to improving ambulance services throughout Ontario," said Mrs. Caplan.

The station, near Highways 10 and 401, is expected to open in October. Two ambulances will be stationed there.

The 100-member service, which has seven other stations in Mississauga, Milton, Oakville and Burlington, responded to about 30,000 calls in 1989-90, up from 26,000 calls in 1988-89.

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