

**Acton shopping centre**

# Residents express concern to developer

By **BEN DUMMETT**  
The Herald

After hearing a spokesman for Freure Management describe the company's proposal to build a 35,000 square foot commercial shopping centre at 252 Queen Street in Acton during a public meeting Tuesday at the Halton Hills Civic Centre, several neighboring residents expressed concerns about traffic congestion, garbage disposal, the centre's encroachment on nearby residents and the inability of Acton to support a shopping plaza of such magnitude.

Don Lindsay, the owner of the Acton grocery store, Foodland, received a round of applause after arguing the proposed development would mean the end to several existing Acton businesses.

"We, (Acton), need a shot in the arm, not a kick in the pants," Mr.

Lindsay told the developer's representative, John Redmond.

The proposed plaza, if approved, would include a grocery store and a family restaurant, as well as a variety of other retail stores, Mr. Redmond told an audience of approximately 50 people.

But Mr. Lindsay argued, based on his 35 years in the grocery store business, he knows there isn't the market to support 14 stores and another grocery store.

Most businesses are "hanging by a string" as it is, said Mr. Lindsay. He then went on to argue the majority of people living in Acton commute to work and as a result do their shopping at retail outlets located near to where they work.

Acton could only support a plaza the size of the one being proposed if it grew by another 3,000 people and if and when this happens a more appropriate location for such a centre would be farther east, said

Mr. Lindsay.

Mr. Redmond countered by saying a marketing study carried out by the developer shows the plaza would encourage Acton residents to do their shopping in town and thereby benefit all businesses in Acton. He explained that the plaza, by offering a wide selection of stores, would enhance the shopping experience in Acton.

If the proposal is eventually approved by Halton Hills Council it would replace a vacant industrial building currently on the proposed site, Andrew Colley, a town planner, told the audience. The developer needs council to amend the area zoning bylaw from industrial and general commercial to a site specific commercial zone, and amend the Halton Hills Official Plan, said Mr. Colley.

The resulting increase in traffic congestion on Queen Street at the entrance of the plaza was another

concern expressed by several residents.

When one Acton resident, Paul Cunningham, was told by Mr. Redmond that a traffic study of the area showed traffic lights would not be required if the centre was built, Mr. Cunningham said he couldn't believe that and asked the developer if he could read the study. Mr. Redmond said he would make the document available to any member of the public.

Town Engineer, Bob Austin, confirmed the findings of the developer's traffic study but went on to say the engineering department still has some concerns about the final details concerning the effects an increase in traffic would have on the area.

Mr. Colley told the audience none of the external agencies nor the town departments asked to comment on the proposal objected to the plan in principle. He did say, however, there are still some unresolved issues concerning the layout of the shopping centre.

Concerning the issue of garbage

disposal, Mr. Redmond told the audience that two areas behind the plaza have been designated to hold garbage until it is collected. On the issue of night truck traffic making deliveries to the stores, Mr. Redmond said except on the rare occasion there would be no deliveries after 6:30 p.m.

Those residents bordering on the property on the south side requested they have input on what kind of fence the developers build to ensure the development doesn't encroach on their privacy. Mr. Redmond said he had no problem with this request.

Under the province's planning act, the town's planning staff will now write a report on the viability of the plaza and in doing so will comment on the concerns expressed by the public. Once the report is completed the staff will make a recommendation supporting or opposing the development at which time council will make the final decision. No date was set at Monday's meeting on when this decision would be made.

## Town general committee votes against Ballinafad proposal

By **BEN DUMMETT**  
The Herald

Halton Hills General Committee voted seven to six against a 20 estate lot rural development proposed for the rural area of Ballinafad, Tuesday night, but not before a lengthy and sometimes heated debate during which Mayor Russ Miller at one point referred to comments made by town councillor Robert Heaton as "ridiculous."

Coun. Heaton, speaking against the development proposal, suggested during the debate speculators are "pulling the strings" on the Town's planning process, to which the mayor later commented he couldn't believe a councillor "could get up and make such a ridiculous statement."

The councillor made his statement in the context that he couldn't understand how the town planning staff supported the development proposal, when the Niagara Escarpment Commission, acting as a commenting agency on whether the subdivision conformed to the NEC plan, opposed it.

The NEC was one of several agencies asked by the town's planning staff to comment on the validity of the proposal. It was the only one to oppose the proposal.

The NEC staff said the proposal, which was initiated by Beechbrook Development, conformed to the commission's plan but the NEC commissioners decided otherwise and voted against the proposal. According to the NEC report, the commissioners decided the development didn't conform to the plan because it wouldn't maintain the scenic values of the land; it wouldn't maintain the open landscape character of the area and the land in question represents good farm land.

The NEC originally supported the application but subsequently rejected it.

The Town's General Committee is comprised of the town councillors.

### Clarification

Halton Hills Councillor Pam Johnston was quoted as saying equipment had been stolen from a Maple Avenue property in Georgetown in a story headlined "Maple Avenue house attracts prospective owners" in the Sept. 1 issue of the Herald Outlook. The councillor used the word flagstone and not equipment.

Councillors who opposed the proposal included Mayor Russ Miller, Robert Heaton, Norm Elliott, Pat McCarthy, Al Cook, Alf Spence and Marilyn Serjeanston.

Those who supported the development included Ann Currie, Rick Bonnette, Gerald Rennie, Lil Bowman and Joe Hewitt. Council will vote on the decision of the general committee Monday.

Coun. Elliott seemed to reflect the opinion of many councillors when he explained that technically the Beechbrook proposal was one of the most complete and sound ever presented to the town. But at the same time he represented the feelings of many councillors in that he couldn't support it because the NEC had rejected it.

It was also on this basis that residents opposing the development voice their opposition.

Mr. Andre Levesque, a lawyer for the firm Davis Webb and Schulze, who spoke on behalf of the opposing residents, argued among other things that although the NEC staff supported the subdivision the

commissioners make the final decision and as such the town should abide by their ruling.

When asked for his comments on why town staff supported the development while the NEC rejected it the Town's Director of Planning Ian Keith suggested the commissioners misread or misinterpreted the NEC plan. "I can't understand why the commissioners supported it," continued the planner.

The developer's representative, local lawyer Bert Arnold, argued despite the commissioners decision the NEC staff said the development conforms with the commission plan and thus it conforms with Halton Region Official Plan. The Region's Official Plan reflects that of the NEC with respect to lands coming under the jurisdiction of the commission.

Mr. Arnold also argued technical data compiled by the developer and reviewed by the town planning staff meets the town's strict criteria for rural estate subdivisions.



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