

Community

R.A.I.D.D. meeting

Developers have mixed reaction to proposal

By BEN DUMMETT
The Herald

The reaction was mixed among Halton Hills developers to an invitation by a local ratepayers association for developers and the public to work together in determining where development should happen in Halton Hills, during an information meeting, Wednesday at Georgetown and District High School.

The local group, Residents Active in Development Decisions, (R.A.I.D.D.) put on the public meeting. During her opening remarks, RAIDD chairperson Gail Rutherford stated emphatically the group does not oppose development. Instead, the group's interest lies in ensuring the public has a say where development is best suited for the town.

Ian Matthews, who has been a developer in Georgetown or the last 20 years, owns land in Georgetown and is a member of the province's Urban Development Institute, commended RAIDD for holding the informa-

tion meeting.

"Your emphasis on public participation in the development process is very good, he told the audience of approximately 250 people.

Mr. Matthews said he has found that "the earlier and more informed the public is about a development project the more the process proceeds smoothly."

Mr. Matthews was referring to the purpose of the meeting which centred on the stages that a development proposal goes through before it is approved or rejected by town council. More specifically, the meeting centred on where, within the process, the public can offer input.

Another local developer, Al Pilutti, wasn't that supportive of the group and its invitation. Mr. Pilutti accused the ratepayers association of opposing all development.

The attitude of the group's membership, now that they've moved to Georgetown, is "they want everything stopped. I think this (attitude is unjust and unfair)," said Mr. Pilutti.

Mrs. Rutherford responded by saying "I think those comments are unjust and unfair."

Acknowledging that the group has heard the argument before, Ms. Rutherford stressed that the group supports responsible development, meaning it opposes Halton Hills becoming another Mississauga or Brampton. "We want you to listen to what we have to say," said Ms. Rutherford.

A developer behind a project on Danville Street in Acton called the group's approach to development "half-cocked." The group has failed to consider the financial consequences the public suffers when development projects are delayed. The developer had initially planned to build the development in the early 70's, at which time the houses would have sold for \$17,000. But because the project was held up in the approval process for 15 years, the houses were sold for between \$140,000 and \$160,000. The homeowners could have saved \$100,000 each if they could have

bought the houses in the early 70's, argued the developer.

Ms. Rutherford said she took offence to the group being called half-cocked. "We are taking everything into account. If your development was held up 15 years there must have been good reason for it," she said to applause.

During much of the meeting the RAIDD group received support from the general public in the audience. However, one gentleman suggested that the group become more proactive instead of reactive to development if it wants to increase membership.

Ms. Rutherford said that this is only the group's first public meeting but plans are in the works to create a plan for the future.

Ms. Rutherford encouraged the audience to participate in the public process of the town's urban structure review, which the town is currently undergoing. Involvement in the process is the only way people can influence the direction of development in town, she said.

Council seeking control over police budget

Halton Regional Council is hopeful the new NDP provincial government is more receptive to giving municipalities final say over their respective police budgets.

The Ontario Police Commission, (OPC), a provincially appointed body, is currently the final arbitrator over all municipal police budgets. In the case of Halton Region if council rejected the 1991 Halton police budget increase the department could appeal that decision to the OPC.

During the 1990 budget

deliberations Regional council objected to the OPC as final arbitrator since the municipality funds 100 per cent of the police budget.

At the time the Region appealed to the Solicitor General of Ontario to amend the legislation so that the municipality had final say over the police budget. But no changes were made to the legislation.

The Halton Regional Police budget comprises more than 50 per cent of the Region's total operating budget and for 1990 the police budget increased 15 per

cent.

According to a Regional staff report by Treasurer Joe Rinaldo, Halton council will send a letter to the new premier requesting changes be made to the appropriate legislation.

The Region is proposing that it have the right to review, evaluate, amend and approve the police budget in the same way it has final say over the budget of any other Regional department, said Mr. Rinaldo. The only difference would be that if the police department disagreed with council's decision it could appeal that

decision to an independent body such as the Ontario Municipal Board, said Mr. Rinaldo.

Under the proposed new legislation, the province would still have control over determining the standards for police service across the province, he said.

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