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Advisory committee gains acceptance

By BEN DUMMETT

The Herald

"An excellent idea" is the way a new committee comprised of representatives from local ratepayer groups advising Halton Hills Planning Staff on how the Town should be shaped during the next 10 to 20 years, is being described.

David McNally, representing the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce echoed the sentiments of many on the committee saying, "it is an excellent idea for them (local ratepayer groups) to get to know one another. In the past we have been on opposite sides but this way a lot of things can be worked out." He made his comments during the committee's first meeting Friday at the Halton Hills Civic Centre.

Committee members represent a variety of interests ranging from business to development, to agriculture, to the environment. A total of 20 ratepayer groups are represented on the committee.

Specifically, the committee has been established to express issues they think are relevant to the Town's Urban Area Study review.

The purpose of the study is to develop recommendations concerning where low, medium and high density housing should be located in Halton Hills' two urban areas, Georgetown and Acton. The study doesn't consider the rural area.

At the meeting's onset, Mr. McNally was wary of the committee.

"People out there (on the street) are tired of studies and if

the province doesn't like it that's too bad," said Mr. McNally.

He was responding to Town Planning Director Ian Keith's explanation that the province requires municipalities located in the Greater Toronto Area to specify where in the specific municipality various types of housing should be located. The underlying principle being, there should be adequate housing for people of all economic levels, said Mr. Keith.

Mr. McNally then went on to question who is funding the study and why the Town is using consultants to help conduct it.

Mr. Keith told the committee the study will cost \$99,000 of which \$85,000 will be covered by the province. The Town has hired Toronto-based planning consultants Walker, Wright, Young Associated Limited to lead the study.

Mr. Keith said his department lacks the time and resources to carry out the study alone.

Aside from looking at housing, the study will also determine if the commercial areas in Georgetown and Acton should be expanded, said Mr. Keith.

Expanding on Mr. Keith's statements, the Town's consultant Wendy Knott, told committee members the Halton Hills Official Plan currently lacks detail concerning where various housing densities should be located in the Georgetown and Acton urban areas. As a result, the Town's zoning bylaws don't reflect the Halton Hills Official Plan. The

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Free balloons

While waiting in line to receive their free balloon from the Town of Halton Hills Recreation and Parks Department booth at the Back to Acton Days celebration in Prospect Park, this trio (left to right)

Brittany Walker, Shawn Walker and Patrick Eagan thought they'd check out a bunch of balloons that were part of the booth display. (Herald photo)

Mother faces sex charges

After being taught in school the difference between good touch and bad touch, a six-year-old Halton Hills boy told the school vice-principal his mother was touching him in bad ways, Halton Regional Police report.

Police were informed of the allegations and began a joint investigation with case workers from the Halton Children's Aid Society.

They have since charged the mother with one count of incest, one count of sexual interference,

one count of invitation to sexual touching and one count of sexual assault.

Police say the boy revealed to police officers, with the use of two anatomically correct dolls, that he had anal sex, oral sex, sexual intercourse and touching with his mother.

The child is now in the custody of the Halton Children's Aid Society in their emergency foster care system.

The mother, who is separated from the boy's father, will appear in Milton Court July 22.

Charity golf tourney

The 15th Annual Bill Smith Invitational Golf Tournament has only a few tickets remaining for its raffle draw, which will take place on Monday during the event at the North Halton Golf and Country Club.

First prize is air transportation for two to any destination within the continental United States, plus \$1,000 cash. Tickets are \$5 each and can be obtained at Bill Smith Auto Parts, 334 Guelph Street in Georgetown.

For participants in the tournament, four cars are available to be won on the course: a 1991 Chrysler from Georgetown

Chrysler, a 1991 Ford from Capital Ford Sales, a 1991 Honda from Georgetown Honda and a 1991 Mazda from Achilles Motors.

All golfers will receive golf towels, balls, tees, sunscreen, gum and other items, while also competing in some "closest to the hole" competitions. There will also be a valuable prize (rumored to be a specially customized car) given to the most honest golfer in order to help keep those scores closer to reality this year. Nearly 250 people will be taking part in the tournament, which tees off at 7:00 a.m.

Tourist location designation rejected

Halton Hills General Committee, Monday, rejected a request by local realtors that the Town be designated as a tourist location thus permitting wide-open Sunday shopping, and instead offered a compromise solution.

Local realtors Gary Brand and Finn Poulstrup appeared before General Committee requesting committee endorse a resolution calling for the Town to apply to Halton Region for a Town-wide tourist designation under the province's Retail Business Holidays Act, (RBHA).

If granted by the Region, a tourist designation would permit all retail outlets in Halton Hills to open legally on Sundays.

The current legislation and the changes now being proposed by the New Democratic Party (NDP) government to the (RBHA) are unfair, Mr. Brand told committee members. General Committee is comprised of Town councillors.

Both the legislation as it is and the proposed changes, deny realtors the "freedom of choice to practice their profession on Sundays," he said.

The legislation's inequity would be rectified if Halton Region declared Halton Hills a tourist designated area, said Mr. Brand.

Committee members agreed with both men that the existing legislation and the changes being proposed are unfair to realtors. However, they disagreed that a Town-wide tourist designation would be the solution.

Committee members supported Acton Councillor Norm Elliott who said, "we would be opening up a Pandora's Box if we requested a wide-open tourist designation."

Committee members recommended a more appropriate resolution would be for the Region to exempt realtors "in the same manner" it exempts tourist locations from having to close Sundays. The recommendation goes before Town Council this Monday for final consideration.

Asked why they didn't centre their request on the real estate industry alone, Mr. Brand told committee members, "we don't want to be seen as being selfish."

Mr. Poulstrup explained the RBHA in the current or proposed version is unfair because new home sales offices such as those found at subdivision locations are permitted to open Sundays while realtors offices must remain closed.

"The legislation interferes with free enterprise and people should be as mad as hell. What will be next?" said Mr. Brand.

He then said the provincial government has wrongly labelled realtors as retail employers when really "we are dedicated self-employed entrepreneurs."

Asked if they had met with North-Halton MPP Noel Duignan to explain their position, Mr. Brand said representatives from the Brampton Real Estate Board, the umbrella group for Halton Hills realtors, were denied a meeting with Mr. Duignan. The

MPP couldn't be reached at press time to comment on the failed meeting.

Representing a minority view, Acton Coun. Gerald Rennie said committee's recommendation wouldn't address the realtor's needs. The recommendation, in requesting Halton Region exempt realtors in the same manner it exempts tourist locations, means realty offices should be permitted to open Sundays because of their very nature. However, Coun. Rennie points out the Region can only permit tourist operations to open Sundays.

Following the meeting, Mr. Poulstrup said he was pleased with committee's recommendations because it puts the issue out into the public.

He predicted the resolutions will be more specific by Monday's council meeting to ensure Halton Region can endorse it.

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