

Friction within housing committee makes good copy

I'd be the first to admit it, conflict makes good news copy.

And judging by the outcomes of the first two meetings between members of a Town steering committee who are looking at future development for Acton and Georgetown, this committee will be a major source of news for months to come.

The committee is comprised of representatives from various ratepayer groups, the Town planning staff and their consultants. It was formed to solicit public input on the issue of what types of housing development would be suitable for Georgetown and Acton, and where the different types of housing should be located in the two communities.

An underlying idea behind the committee's formation was to find a consensus between various

groups including the general public, business community, and developers and builders.

Indeed during the first meeting, which happened earlier this summer, developers and those more wary of certain types of development agreed they should work together to dispel the perceived mistrust existing between them.

Ironically these comments were made after certain members of the committee opposed the meeting being scheduled during the afternoon. At that time it was decided the fairest solution for all would be to alternate the meetings between the evenings and afternoons.

However, during the next meeting which happened last Tuesday, a lot of members not representing the developers or



Ben's Banter
by Ben Dummett

business community voted against the next meeting being held during the evening. In the end, Committee Chair and Town Planning Director Ian Keith decided on an evening meeting. People may argue this example

of conflict between some committee members is petty. They probably think I highlighted this example because I might not want to cover evening meetings. However, I think it is an indication of the problems the committee members will have when they get down to the nitty gritty.

For instance at the last meeting tempers flared when the committee members started to discuss the issue of building size. Gail Rutherford, President of Residents Active in Development Decisions (RAIDD) and a committee member suggested Town planners should consider the size of existing buildings in any given area when determining where certain types of new development should be located.

Local developer and committee member Al Pilutti responded by

asking "what does building scale mean. Through the debate, Mr. Pilutti admitted he knew what scale meant, no surprise since he is a builder.

The point is Mr. Pilutti doesn't want the restriction of building scale placed on buildings. He fears building size restrictions will make it economically unfeasible for development to happen, especially since land prices are so high.

Committee members like Ms. Rutherford want scale to be applied because, without the application of this principle, the Town's character is jeopardized.

It's great the various committee members want to work together but if neither is willing to compromise their respective visions about future development this goal will never be realized.

Political Forum

Media attention on Kealey shows banking system fragile

For just about every day I have been an MP, he's been there, standing across from the door to the House of Commons.

Glen Kealey has with him a sign calling the prime minister a liar. He has a pair of green foam dice which he hangs from the carved stone fence. He has a bright pink stuffed pig. And every time he sees me, or any other Conservative MP, he shouts "Resign!" When he sees a Quebec MP, he does it in french - "Demissionnez!"

Kealey is most often there before and after Question Period - when Parliament turns into a media circus. After QP, as people in Ottawa call it, the foyer outside the House of Commons is jammed with reporters, cameras and lights. They often spill outside, and Kealey is right there to heckle Mulroney or Clark or whomever is getting the gears that day.

Before Question Period, Kealey heads down to Wellington Street in front of Parliament, and waves

a sign denouncing government at the cars going by.

He does this routine in snow and rain and heat. This is the man's self-given, full-time job. He appears to be on some kind of mission. And last week he got more media attention than he could ever have dreamed of.

Kealey says he was once asked for a bribe to get a government contract by a man who is no longer a cabinet minister. I have no idea if this is true or not. His charges are personal, and have not been investigated yet by the police. Ontario's attorney-general must decide now if there's enough evidence to prosecute the charges, or let them drop.

But there have already been consequences - and I write about this topic today because it shows how fragile the whole system really can be.

Kealey's charges were hugely covered by the media - front page stuff. The news went out on the wire, and found its way within

Ottawa Report

Garth Turner
MP
Halton-Peel
Progressive Conservative



hours to Tokyo. And when the news got there it wasn't that one man had made charges which were not yet investigated. Instead, it was news of a "political scandal" in the Canadian government.

Many Japanese investors in Canadian securities were already

nervous after some recent scandals with large Tokyo investment

dealers. So this news was all they needed - the word to "sell Canada" went out.

The result was a run on the Canadian dollar. Our currency lost almost a full cent in one day - and things would have accelerated if the Bank of Canada has not stepped in and slowed the selling down by buying up Canadian dollars.

So what? So the Bank also found itself having to raise interest rates as another way of putting the brakes on the dollar's slide. So, last Thursday - reversing months of steady declines - the Bank of Canada rates were up.

Things are still unsteady on the markets, raising the prospect of more rate increases and dollar woes in the weeks to come. Until the Kealey charges are determined one way or the other - valid or frivolous - the climate can stay volatile.

It would truly be a shame if loan and mortgage rates rise as a

result. We don't need that now, just as we were seeing some first signs that this grinding recession might be coming to an end.

It is also kind of amazing how all these things can happen so quickly. One day there's a man standing there shouting at me, with a pink pig in his hand. The next day that same man has caused a run on the Canadian dollar and threatens to increase my car payments.

Maybe we ought to look at this system of justices of the peace. Maybe if charges are going to be laid, they should come after a police investigation - not before. Maybe all the reporters who jumped on this should have explained some of the circumstances to the rest of the world.

Perhaps if the Japanese could have seen Glen Kealey's green foam dice, or watched him waving his signs at the traffic every day, they would have had a different impression.

People's Forum

Recreation and Parks Director defends baseball facilities

Editor's note: The following letter from Halton Hills Recreation and Parks Director Tom Shepard was forwarded to the Herald for publication. Because of the letter's length, it will be published in two parts - the first half in today's edition and the second part in Friday's edition.

J.A. Aubin,
President, G.B.A.
P.O. Box 236,
Georgetown, Ont. L7G 4T1

Dear Mr. Aubin:
Subject: Response to your letter of June 23, 1991 re: Baseball Facility Deficiencies.

Thank you for your recent letter outlining your organization's concerns regarding the provision and maintenance of baseball facilities in Georgetown; the following will attempt to address your concerns.

Later this year the department will be undertaking the preparation of an update to its Master Plan. The Master Plan will review the department's delivery of service in all areas of its mandate, including parks and playing fields, identifying current and future deficiencies and providing recommendations for remedial actions.

Given a situation of finite

resources, it is imperative that all areas of service be addressed through a comprehensive planning process in order that priorities can be identified and a financially responsible action plan can be prepared. The only meaningful process towards the preparation of a Master Plan involves the receipt of extensive and balanced public input, which obviously will be time consuming. Based on an assumption that the Master Plan will identify the provision of additional sports fields as a high priority, the 1991 approved Capital Forecast identifies funds for land acquisition in 1994. Presuming that the Master Plan would be completed in late 1992 and following Council acceptance, a process of site identification, land acquisition and site planning would be required, the projected time frame for financial planning appears to be appropriate.

In the interim, the Recreation and Parks Department encourages your organization's attempts to identify coping strategies for the (hopefully) short term.

With respect to the issue of playing field maintenance I am enclosing for your information, a

copy of the department's Maintenance Standard for Parks Playing Fields, Open Space and School Sites which defines maintenance responsibilities for playing fields. The standard does not include the department's responsibilities for cemeteries operation and maintenance, which also demands a significant amount of our staff time and equipment resources.

The matter of infield drainage is a problem to some degree on most of our infields, particularly in the Georgetown area where underlying clay soils tend to exacerbate surface run off problems. The most effective solutions involve regrading works to establish proper surface drainage over both the infield and outfield, however, the high cost of such works and the lack of alternative facilities to accommodate users during reconstruction and restoration periods are prohibitive. You refer specifically to Diamond "1" at the Fairgrounds; in 1987 the department installed sub surface drainage tile system along the base paths draining to a dry well as a remedial measure to drainage problems evident at that time. Yours is the first complaint of this nature to follow since that installation. Staff will inspect the site and determine to what extent further remedial measures might be undertaken. As indicated within the Maintenance Standard, all infields receive regular machine grooming, in addition, top dressing at most major facilities takes place during pre and post season

maintenance activities.

The fact that coaches are assisting in litter control is appreciated. It is frustrating to observe accumulations of litter within the parks, particularly under bleachers, when litter containers are situated so conveniently for everyone's use. In response, staff are assigned twice weekly to litter control in major parks, which obviously reduces their availability for other maintenance activities.

Staff will perform the needed repairs to the backstop at Diamond No. 1 required following repairs performed during the pre

season; the third base player's benches at Diamond No. 4 were relocated on June 26th, per your earlier request.

Staff have inspected and repaired turf damages following each of the special events operating in the Fairgrounds this season. Please note that the Fairgrounds is a multiple use facility and as damages occur by other means, your group's assistance in reporting their location to the department would be useful in securing their prompt repair.

(To be continued)

Employment Centre Thank You

To the People of Halton Hills:

The summer of 1991 is beginning to wind down and it is time once again for the Canada Employment Centre for Students to close its doors.

Over the summer months, we have thoroughly enjoyed our contact with the students and employers of Halton Hills, and we hope we have been helpful in serving employment needs in the community. Much of our satisfaction has come from the interest and support the community has shown us towards student employment.

While working in a smaller community like Halton Hills, we were able to get to know the students and employers we worked with well.

The positive attitudes and cooperation we encountered were

encouraging and made our jobs more pleasant.

Once again, thank you for your kindness and support throughout the summer months. We look forward to serving you next year.

Yours sincerely,
Chris Fernandes, CEC-S
Supervisor, Nancy Albers
and Shelley Powell.

Write us a letter!

The Herald wants to hear from you. If you have an opinion you want to express or a comment to make, send us a letter or drop by the office. Our address is 45 Guelph Street, Georgetown, Ontario L7G 3Z6.

All letters must be signed. Please include your address and telephone number for verification.

The Herald reserves the right to edit letters due to space limitations.