



BOUNTIFUL HARVEST: Strawberry rhubarb and asparagus tempted shoppers at the first Acton Farmer's Market of the season last Thursday. Krystal and her brother Gary Power manned the Andrew's Scenic Acres booth. — Ted Tyler photo

Deferral for Sixth Line subdivision

Wanting concerned residents to be "comfortable" and not sue anybody, Town councillors deferred voting for two weeks on a proposed rural estate subdivision that has been on the books since 1975.

While the Town and Regional Official Plans no longer allow estate subdivisions in rural areas, the Esquering Developments application was filed under older permissive Official Plans. The development is a 20-lot subdivision on the Sixth line, north of 17 Side Road, and while area residents are worried about their well water, street lighting and tree preservation, their major concerns is with traffic safety.

Their concerns prompted the Town to move the entrance to the development southerly, but not far enough for some residents who asked that approval be deferred until September at last Monday's council meeting.

Area resident Kevin

Lake said safety is a priority, and he's optimistic they can reach an acceptable solution, given more time. He said the proposed entrance, is "dangerous", a serious threat to public safety, and "an accident waiting to happen." He said Town approval by July 15 to meet the developer's deadline for a sale of the project to a builder should not supercede due diligence.

Lake said a new entrance location should be studied and validated as safe by an independent, comprehensive traffic safety study. Three other area residents, echoed Lake's comments, stressing they are not anti-development, but have major concerns about safety.

The decision to defer the vote for two weeks left the developer's planner, former Town planner Glenn Wellings, "pretty disappointed" and "frustrated." He reminded Town staff that their traffic engineer has already

signed off on the safety of the relocated entrance location. He said the other issues would be dealt with during the planning process.

Suggested by the rural councillors, the deferral will give residents a "digest" the information, according to Ward Two Councillor Joan Robson who said they had checked out the ifs, ands and buts of the application and believe it is as staff reports — safe and good.

"I know nobody here wants to be sued for millions of dollars and we do our very best to make sure that our roads and accesses are safe, however, I understand the residents' concerns," Robson said, asking for the deferral so the residents can be comfortable with what is being proposed.

NEC rejects horse show application

Equestrian centre is a major business, not a farm operation

It is very unlikely the Canadian Country Classic horse show will be held at Halton Place this fall following a Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) vote last Thursday to refuse a development permit application for the three events at the facility on 15 Side Road, west of the Third Line,

An expected appeal of that decision by owner, Timur Leckebusch, can not be heard before the scheduled August 24 start of the first show. An appeal of an earlier NEC refusal for unlimited shows and overnight camping at Halton Place will be heard July 18, before an Environmental Review Tribunal.

NEC manager Ken Whitbread said after a lot of discussion at the regular NEC monthly meeting, the Commission learned that the scale of the operation, primarily because of its success, is not in keeping with what the NEC expects from a normal farm operation.

"This was an on-going commercial business, basically it was sort of now distantly related to the horse farm. The commission asked how many horses the gentleman (owner) actually had himself with all these thousands and thousands of square feet of buildings

— apparently he has eight," Whitbread said.

More than a dozen neighbours of Halton Place, have argued before the Town and the NEC that Halton Place is no longer a horse show facility, but a large commercial enterprise with 11 rings and six parking areas. They are also unhappy that Halton Place continues to build and develop without the required permits.

Halton Place is located in a designated Escarpment Rural Area where equestrian facilities are allowed, as long as they are an accessory or incidental to agriculture, and not commercial, major recreational or destination-type land use. The Town conditionally supports the three-event application, but only if Halton Place completes conditions in four open building permits, one dating back to 2003.

Halton Place is a breeding and training facility with outdoor competitive rings that is sanctioned by both Equine Canada and the FEI — a Paris-based international equestrian federation — with the second highest ranking, more evidence the NEC planning report said to show how "different" Halton Place is from a normal farm/agricultural operation involving horses.

Halton Place cancelled the first three weeks of horse shows in May, June and

July after the NEC wrote to the Ontario Equestrian Federation and Equine Canada, asking them to withhold horse shows and related permits until the NEC issues a development permit.

Rural Councillor Joan Robson said Leckebusch may be an "excellent businessman" but had "broken every rule."

"It is time they were taken to task for what they have broken so far...so let's see if they want to shape up and do business as we do it in North America in a clean way," Robson said on Monday, adding that area residents won't take the continued abuse of their rights.

"I'm not saying this is a bad business — this is a great business, and certainly the Town of Halton Hills would love to see them come into compliance...but if they can't so business in a respectable and respectful manner, then they should sit back and re-examine their situation."

Whitbread said that once the NEC sends out a notice of its decision, a 12-day appeal period begins, but with the current Canada Post strike, he was unsure when that notification would go out.

At press time, neither Halton Place owner Leckebusch, nor his lawyer, had responded to requests for comment.

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- accompanying the congregation and choir,
- rehearsing the Chancel choir. A full job description is available from the Church office.

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