

Town's 'preferential treatment' of HP criticized by neighbours

By **CYNTHIA GAMBLE**
Staff Writer

The ongoing dispute between Fourth Line/15 Sideroad residents and their neighbour, Halton Place, ratcheted up a notch at Monday's Town council meeting.

Residents appealed to council members to deny a staff recommendation that Halton Place be given another three months to complete a required site plan agreement.

The agreement was a condition of a Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) approval permitting 2009 and 2010 equestrian events at Halton Place on 15 Sideroad.

The residents also asked the NEC in December to revoke that approval because they say Halton Place has violated five conditions, including not completing the required Town site plan agreement.

The Town had allowed the 2009 events to go ahead provided Halton Place met specified deadlines for a number of studies: traffic impact, tree preservation and inventory, geotechnical, and stormwater management implementation. Halton Place did not meet either the August or November deadlines, but filed the required studies on Jan. 9.

In a presentation to council, Thomas Arnold, Halton Place solicitor, acknowledged the consultant reports were late, but said the site plan agreement could now be completed within three months.

But local residents, led by Jack Pemberton and Mike Shantz, said enough is enough.

"It would appear Halton Place is getting preferential treatment," Pemberton told council. "When council allows Halton Place to continue to defy and ignore regulations and requirements without penalty, and continue to issue Halton Place permits, we question whether that it is effective municipal governance."

Shantz distributed photos of the construction of a new equestrian ring on the property, involving more than 50 truckloads of fill and eight large earth-moving machin-

ery, all of which he said was being done without any permits.

"This is out of control," Shantz said.

Town planning director Bruce MacLean said Halton Place had told the Town this track was related to the agricultural nature of the equestrian farm, and not with the 2010 event schedule, and therefore permitted. But, he added, the NEC told the Town a permit was required, and the earthmoving and dumping of fill was also a violation of the Town's site alteration bylaw.



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He said while Halton Place has not met the target dates, they have been co-operative, but their application is a tough issue involving multiple agencies and jurisdictions—Town, Region, Conservation Halton and the NEC.

But the patience exhibited by council in the past is starting to wear thin, with a number of councillors critical of Halton Place.

"There's a pattern set here (by Halton Place) of violating every rule laid down, so I'd like

to do something very strong here so we get the results we need," said Ward 2 Councillor Joan Robson.

And her ward colleague, Bryan Lewis said, "I think Halton Place has to be told it has to be done right and not their way."

Council added several amendments:

- Request the NEC not issue a permit for 2010 events until the site plan agreement, with any of recommended works after the review of the consultants' studies is done, is completed,

- That council gets an interim status report at the March 8 meeting,

- That the NEC be invited to a future council meeting to explain the Halton Place application permit process.

Staff was also directed to look into a report by the residents that Conservation Halton is investigating the storage of a large pile manure buried near the headwaters of 16 Mile Creek.

"It's unfortunate it's a hammer but a necessary hammer," said Mayor Rick Bonnette, "to try to get peace in the neighbourhood."

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