

Developers offer to pay for planner

By JANET BAINE
Staff writer

Halton Hills may soon have a new planner whose salary is paid by three local developers.

There is a severe backlog in the planning department and three local developers have offered to pay \$45,000 to \$53,000 for a planner's salary for one year to help alleviate the problem.

"The real solution (to the backlog) is several more planners. One planner will make a substantial difference, but we're terribly concerned about the perception in the community that developers are giving us money to expedite their own particular concerns," Planning director Ian Keith said.

The planner on contract wouldn't work on the three developments, but would do other projects, freeing up town staff to carry out their priorities as already outlined, he said.

"This is a legitimate, logical and imaginative solution to decrease the backlog," Councillor Gerald Rennie said. He added he fully believes in the credibility of the planning department.

A report by Keith points out that there are 113 projects on file for Halton Hills, and this represents a workload of over four years of projects, assuming that no new ones are submitted. In addition, there are 25 new planning proposals from the Province which town planners need to comment on and the Ontario Municipal Board hearing on Acton developers is also taking a considerable amount of time, he

said.

The three developers willing to pay the salary of a planner are Halton Hills Village Homes (for a development in Georgetown South), Georgetown Investments and Meadowglen (which have a development in north Georgetown) and Acto-2 Investments (which has a development in north east Acton).

The contract person would not be actively working on any of these proposals, but would instead be used on other projects and help to free up time for the planning staff to attend to other priorities.

Councillor Rob Heaton proposed to amend the motion in three ways. First, he suggested the Planning Department search for other solutions to the backlog. Second, the person hired on contract would never have been engaged on any past or present development proposals in Halton region or Halton Hills, and finally, that the person would be disqualified from future private sector work for the region and town.

No one voted in favor of the motion.

Councillor Gail Rutherford said she used to work in personnel, and preventing someone from working in the field for a period of six months is a common practice, but not for an indefinite time. Mayor Russ Miller said he didn't think the town has any jurisdiction to prevent someone from working for the region in the future.

The issue will be voted on at the May 10 council meeting.

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Mulvale seeks PC nomination

Oakville mayor Ann Mulvale shed her non-partisan status for the first time in 10 years as a politician April 29 to announce her candidacy for the Oakville-Milton riding Progressive Conservative federal nomination.

Mulvale, 43, said, "It's a critical time to take a stand for a community such as Oakville. We need to pool our resources and enact the motto of the town, 'Avancez', at the nation-

al level."

Mulvale is the fourth person seeking the Progressive Conservative nomination.

Other candidates include former Oakville and Halton regional councillor Janet Mitchell, former Oakville councillor and Chamber of Commerce executive Jackie Cutmore and current Oakville and Halton regional councillor Stephen Sparling.

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