

Glen Williams considers heritage designation

By JANET BAINE
Staff writer

Residents of the Glen had lots of concerns about the proposed designation of their community as a heritage district at a meeting September 9.

"There are people who won't want to be part of this," acknowledged Steve Foster, chairperson of Heritage Halton Hills (HHH), pointed out that the heritage district designation will allow local residents to have more control over development in the Glen. This will help maintain the unique character of the hamlet.

"The advantage is we're talking about streets, landscapes and infrastructure" and not just individual historical buildings," said Eric Connolly, a HHH member who is working on the proposal.

The meeting was hosted by Heritage Halton Hills (known formerly as the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee - LACAC). The group wanted to explain the proposal to residents, and release the findings of two reports prepared by Tom Wilson, an architectural student at Waterloo University. Wilson has been employed by HHH over the past two summers to do an inventory of properties and write a technical report on the policies related to a heritage district.

"I think the consensus was that ratepayers want an opportunity to review the recommendations and review the draft report," Steve Foster, chairperson of HHH said after the meeting.

His organization will first meet to discuss the recommendations made by Wilson, will then try to get

input from local residents and will likely put a proposal before council in four to six months.

Wilson has recommended the town enact a bylaw to designate Glen Williams as a heritage district which would include Prince, Main and Mountain streets. A committee made up mostly of local residents would be created to come up with the guidelines which would define and enforce the district. They would advise the town and HHH on district permits.

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— Steve Foster

The idea of designating Glen Williams as a heritage district first came up four years ago, and has proceeded slowly because there hasn't been much money to carry out the preliminary work.

"What it really does is empower the local ratepayers to determine how things develop down there," Foster said. Any future development or alterations to the exterior of buildings could be controlled so that the character of Glen Williams will be maintained.

"We want a committee of Glen residents to have the responsibility to hash out the guidelines and make the day-to-day recommendations to

us and council," he said.

The guidelines can be so specific that they would restrict the color of the building and what new materials are used, or they could be much broader and only refer to intent, said Connolly.

An advantage of district designation is that homeowners would be able to apply for grants of \$3,000 or \$6,000 for restoration work.

When some residents raised concerns about the grants, Doug Brock who restored the mill which now belongs to Solinst, pointed out that he was very happy with the administration of the grants.

"The people in the government that I dealt with were absolutely wonderful, they were totally supportive. The grants are offered on a matching basis, they look at how much extra it will cost," he said. "You don't need to be fearful of bureaucracies. There are a whole lot of myths around these days about designating buildings."

One resident was afraid it would take away the control of individual property owners.

"If that person owns that land, that person has a right to make changes...you have to look at that before you get up on your high-falutin' horses," he told HHH members.

An informal survey conducted in 1990 found that 95 per cent of local residents were in favor of the proposal, but Foster said a more formal survey could be done.

Copies of the report are available from several locations: the Glen Town Hall, the Copper Kettle, Glen Williams Public School and the Georgetown Library or by contacting Eric Connolly at 877-0739 or 877-6065.

OMB optimistic solutions will be found

Continued from page 1
put in a ring road to access the developable portions of the property, but

didn't support a request by the developer for 18 additional lots on the west side of that road.

"I am optimistic remedies can be found to overcome any deficiencies the studies may uncover," said Mills.

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