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Arnie Lefebvre (left) of Arnie's Collision Centre and Racheal Banks and Perce Byers of Perce's Automotive Repairs are fighting to retain the current zoning on their Norval automotive repair businesses.
Photo by Ted Brown

Shop owners say zoning change could force businesses to close

By **LISATALLYN**
Staff Writer

Two Norval business owners are hoping the community comes out to support them in their fight to retain the zoning on their properties at a public open house next week.

Arnie Lefebvre of Arnie's Collision Centre (490 Guelph St.) and Perce Byers of Perce's Automotive Repairs Ltd. (546 Guelph St.) in Norval want to retain the zoning (C1 Commercial) that's been applied to their properties since they purchased them. They have both appealed an amendment to include Norval in the Town's Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).

The proposed amendment would change the zoning on Lefebvre's property to Hamlet Commercial and Byers's to Development. Their OMB appeals are on hold pending a review of Norval Secondary Plan—which is the topic of the open house and workshop set for Wednesday (June 19), 6:30 p.m. at Mold-Masters SportsPlex.

Lefebvre is encouraging the community to come to the meeting to support them.

"If you are unable to attend, a letter of support sent to all of our council members would be greatly appreciated," said Lefebvre. "If council passes the zoning designation changes proposed on these properties the businesses of Norval will either have to relocate or close their doors for good."

He said when he bought the property from his mother approximately 15 years ago the zoning permitted an automobile service station and new or used automotive sales. Byers said when he purchased

his property in 2009 that zoning too had allowed new or used automotive sales.

"That was why (auto sales) I bought the property, to be able to do that in the future," said Byers.

Lefebvre said his future plans also include selling used cars on a small scale.

"I buy and fix cars. If I find a good car I can fix it up and sell it. It would enhance my business," said Lefebvre.

Under the changes proposed in the Secondary Plan Review their existing automotive uses would be allowed, but no new or expanded automotive uses, such as car sales, would be.

They both believe retaining the current zoning on the properties would also be more attractive to possible buyers if they chose to sell the businesses in the future. Lefebvre said the more options for business on the property would ensure the best price.

"If they take all that away how does that affect the value of the property?" asked Byers.

Lefebvre admits that he missed the notification from the Town about the re-zoning back in 2010 when it was included with his tax bill. It had almost gone through when he discovered it, hired a lawyer and filed an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board.

"It's been an eye-opener for me that you really have to keep an eye on what's going on in your community," said Lefebvre.

He said he's mad the zoning may be taken away.

"The biggest thing is I've been stripped of this and I would like to get it back," said Lefebvre. "I'm not saying the Town's not listening, but they're reluctant to give us back the new and used auto car sales."

Ted Brown's Ted Bit will return next week