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# BIA concerned about MVA

By Dianne Cornish

While it appears that Georgetown's downtown core will emerge relatively unscathed when region-wide Market Value Assessment (MVA) comes to Halton next year, the potential impact of the tax system on downtown businesses remains a cause of apprehension.

As a result, members of the Georgetown Central Business Improvement Area (BIA) agreed to draft a letter stating its concern about the possible impact of MVA on the downtown Georgetown business community.

"What is this board doing about MVA?" downtown retailer Elizabeth McNeilly asked at Tuesday night's annual general meeting of the BIA. "It's an issue pertinent to the downtown core," she said, adding that it's important the BIA's views on the issue are known to government officials involved with the tax scheme.

"It's on the top of our list for our January meeting," BIA board of management chairman Martha Martino replied. However, town administrator Dan Costea suggested that the downtown business association might want to make its views known sooner than that because "the Region intends to undertake MVA by January 1, 1993." He also warned that assessment rolls based on the new system will be rolled by the end of November.

Although the board's vice-chair Mary-Ellen Stephens said the organization has looked into MVA and "it looks like taxes in the downtown will go down," there was enough uncertainty that members agreed to write a letter either to the Regional

Assessment office in Mississauga and/or Halton Regional headquarters in Oakville.

Before the letter is drafted, BIA manager Margaret Vint will try to get a fuller picture of the possible effects of MVA on the downtown.

According to a report drafted in May for Halton Hills Council by town treasurer Ray King, region-wide MVA will result in "an overall tax decrease in the commercial area (of Halton Hills) of \$511,987. However, within that category, 41 per cent of 548 units will, in fact, receive a tax increase."

Region-wide MVA was narrowly approved for Halton by regional council on September 23. Halton and Oakville councillors voted solidly against the proposal, while Burlington and Milton councillors supported the scheme.

Halton Hills councillor Rick Bonnette, who is also a member of

regional council, is spearheading a drive to have the MVA proposal re-introduced with the hope of stalling its introduction until 1992 market values can be used as the tax base. MVA, if implemented in 1993, will be based on 1988 market values, which don't present a realistic picture of property values in today's market, Bonnette said.

"I plan to present a resolution for re-introduction of discussion on MVA at the Dec. 2 meeting (of regional council)," Bonnette told regional councillors at Wednesday's council meeting. Under regional council's rules of procedure, someone from the majority side of the issue must present the motion that will rekindle discussion on MVA. Halton Hills and Oakville councillors are lobbying other members in hopes that discussion on the topic can be reopened.

## Congregation against gas bar

Continued from page 1

Speaking on behalf of members of St. Stephen's Church, Whaley explained that the church is located immediately west of the proposed Ninth Line alignment on the south side of Steeles Avenue. The Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) has long-range plans calling for the realignment of Ninth Line south of Steeles.

Realignment would be required to connect the Ninth Line with the proposed Highway 407 which the province is planning as a means of alleviating traffic on Highways 401 and 403.

Whaley speculated that Highway 407 won't be built through the

Steeles Avenue/Ninth Line area until after the year 2000. He told council that "the elevations and realignment of Ninth Line are still not final," meaning that development in the area should be approached cautiously.

Whaley also noted that Halton Region has recommended that any decision made by Halton Hills Town Council on the proposal be "held in abeyance" pending the release of the Urban Structure Review recommendations.

Prasad indicated that the recommendations, which will guide development in the Region for many years to come, are expected to be announced this fall.

However, Whaley predicted during a telephone interview Tuesday that results of the regional study won't be known until the spring.

Because of these planning considerations, Whaley suggested that council "hold off" on approving the application for an Official Plan amendment and re-zoning.

The former calls for redesignation of the property from a rural industrial area to rural cluster area, while the latter proposes to re-zone the site from agricultural to service station special.

Whaley said that church members realize that development in the area is "inevitable."

While the members are neither strongly opposed nor strongly in favor of the proposal, they "question the need for yet another gas bar."

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