

# Town can't stop Cantel from erecting tower

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK

Rogers Cantel Inc. is building a 340 foot cellular communications tower in rural Acton, and there is nothing the Town, or local residents, can do to stop it.

A delegation of 20 concerned area residents appealed for help at Monday night's General Committee meeting, but was told there is no guarantee Cantel will even agree to meet with them since the project falls under federal, not municipal, jurisdiction.

Work has already begun on the footings for the massive tower that will be built on a four-acre piece of leased land on the north-east corner of Highway 7 and Dublin Line.

Resident spokesperson Dr. Ron Trenton told councillors the tower will dramatically change the character of the rural cluster area.

"We have concerns about the location of the tower, the height, its future uses, possible health effects and its impact on our community," Trenton said.

"The esthetics of this whole thing is really quite discomfoting to us. This is a rural residential area and we expected we would always be able to see cows grazing in the field and corn growing behind our homes. We never really expected to have this huge industrial complex in our area. We are very suspicious about the height and wonder about the tower's actual use and would like to have that clarified. The plan also calls for a future auxiliary generator. What do they need that for?"

Trenton questioned why the project was moving ahead so quickly. "Already holes have been dug and cement poured for the base. Almost before anybody has a chance to say anything, the tower will be up," Trenton said.

"What hurts me most about this is that we seem relatively powerless to stop this kind of change in our community."

Planning director Ian Keith noted that the Town was able to

help Hornby residents get a proposed Bell Cellular tower moved to a more acceptable location following site plan meetings, and that was one option for this proposal.

"Cantel can build its tower without any Town input, but we have been successful with other tower builders to get them to co-operate with the site plan process because it's to their advantage and to ours. If nothing else, at least it's a public relations process that's good for them and us," Keith said.

Acton councillor Rick Bonnette said the Town should protest to whatever federal ministry has control over the tower.

"What we're seeing here is like a 34-storey building. Even though it's a tower, it's still like a 34-storey building being put in the middle of a rural area without any recourse to residents or the Town.

"I think we should find out what ministry has jurisdiction and send a letter of displeasure or a Council resolution," Bonnette said.

Following the meeting, local resident Roger Gardiner, who is in the communications business, wondered why Cantel wants such a big tower.

"Normally a cellular telephone antenna site would be around 100 to 150 feet high, depending on how big the buildings are that are around it, and how much area you want to cover. It is very clearly known by Cantel, and those of us who use cellular phones, that the Acton area has a deficiency in coverage and clearly there is a site needed in town," Gardiner said.

"If they were only going to be putting up a fill-in site for cellular, then they would probably only need an antenna of 100 feet. There

are a lot of variables, but maybe they want to sell space on the tower and we could end up with an antenna park which would be a tremendous eyesore. Clearly the indication is that they want to use this for something other than cel-

lular because why put up a 340 foot tower? It just doesn't make any sense," Gardiner said.

The Town will contact Cantel officials and ask that they attend a special meeting to discuss specific site plan details for the tower.

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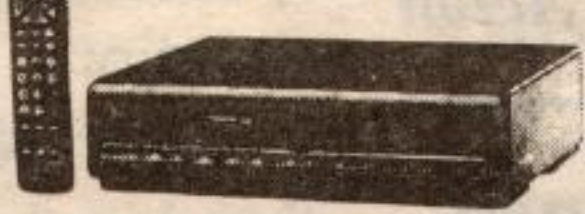
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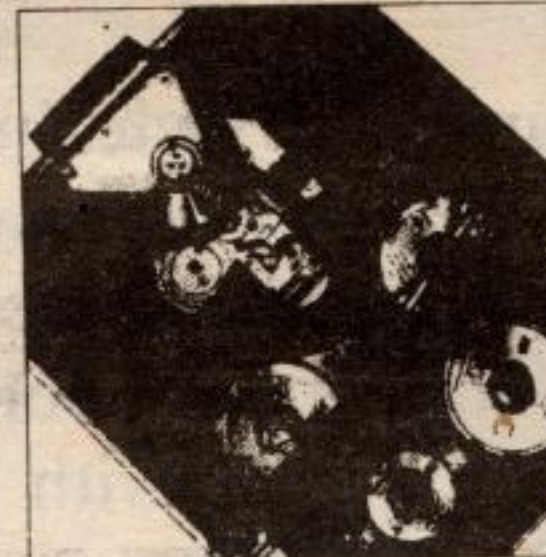
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