

No public meeting slated for south-Rockwood plaza

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Rockwood Miller

If Rockwood residents want to fight plans for a neighbourhood commercial plaza at the south end of the village, they're on their own.

Eramosa Township Council, on the advice of its lawyer, will not call a public meeting so Parked residents can view the latest version of Rockwood developer Lou Hilt's commercial proposal.

Council will also not oppose the project at an Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearing slated for July.

"We have no grounds to oppose a commercial development at that location," explained Eramosa Councillor Gord Tosh at last Tuesday's Council meeting.

"We lost the fight against commercial development across the road from this proposal at a previ-

ous OMB and my concern is that people in the area may think we are still actively going to oppose it," Tosh said.

Instead of opposing all commercial uses, Council now wants to control and restrict them to neighbourhood convenience uses and not a major food store as was originally proposed for the one-acre property.

On Thursday, Hilt's planning

consultant Don Logan described the application for a 10,000 square foot plaza with gas bar and variety store at the corner of Hwy. 25 and MacLennan Street as "vintage."

"This application was submitted to the Township almost eight years ago, in December of '88.

"We have a study that says there will be no impact on the downtown core of Rockwood because of this proposal and that was the

concern of the original Council who denied the application."

Town Council instructed the clerk to tell residents inquiring about the proposal that the Township no longer opposes the application as it did in 1991.

The clerk will also tell people that they can write to the OMB and ask for a public meeting. They can also ask to take part in the July 6 and 7 hearing.

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Council may backtrack on Bowstring Bridge

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
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The many unasked and unanswered questions concerning the controversial decision to replace the Eden Mills Bowstring Bridge may be clarified at a meeting between Eramosa Township Council and top Ministry of Transportation (MOT) officials.

While being careful not to suggest that it is changing its position on applying for funding to replace the aging heritage structure, Eramosa Council voted 3-2 to invite provincial officials to discuss the bridge's future.

Councillor Cathy McIntyre, who suggested the meeting, said new information from members of the Friends of Eden Mills committee sparked her decision to ask for Provincial clarification.

"Chris Wilson (an Eden Mills resident and bridge rehabilitation proponent) told me that he has talked to several structural officials who reported that the Province was currently building two or three one-lane structures," McIntyre said.

"We were told that we would only get funding for a two-lane structure," McIntyre said in an interview outside the Council chambers last Tuesday night.

Asked if the information she wants may lead her to reconsider rehabilitating the bridge, instead of replacing it, McIntyre said "Not at this time.

"I want to check that what is being reported to some Eden Mills residents is accurate. I want all of the information to be heard by all of the interested people, all at the same time."

During debate on the recommendation to ask for a meeting, Reeve Rick Hughes, who has pushed for a bridge condition survey to be done, said that no one seems willing to go for the middle ground on the issue and try to reach a comprehensive decision.

He also cautioned councillors to not assume that if the bridge was replaced with a modern two-lane structure that Wellington County would be willing to take over ownership and financial responsibility for the road and bridge.

Proponents of rehabilitating the bridge feel that a wider bridge and two-lane road would reduce safety for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians and ruin the quiet rural character of the village.

They also claim it would be a waste of taxpayers' dollars since their figures show a new bridge would cost \$1.3 million - some

\$780,000 more than the cost of restoring it.

In an interview on Thursday, Chris Wilson was relieved that Council was finally asking the questions he felt should have been asked before any decision was made on the bridge's future.

"What Council has been saying all along is that they must build a two-lane structure if they tear down the Bowstring Bridge, but MTO official David Lei told me that the Province still does build and pay for single-lane structures."

Wilson said Provincial officials have also told him that there is flexibility in Provincial funding and design for the local-use road and bridge.

"Why are they (Council) not asking the right questions?" Wilson charged.

"Why hasn't staff asked, who is advising them? Maybe the hidden agenda is to get the bridge and road turned over to the County but County officials told members of our group that they don't want it back."

Wilson said that Premier Bob Rae has asked him to prepare a briefing paper on the bridge debate history.

"They (Provincial officials) are following this thing.

"They are aware of what's going on because Eramosa Township officials got a letter from (the Ministry of) Municipal Affairs asking for a full report for the Premier's office, on what has been going on with the bridge and the vote," Wilson said.

"That didn't come from us, so I don't know what the genesis is and I don't know exactly what the

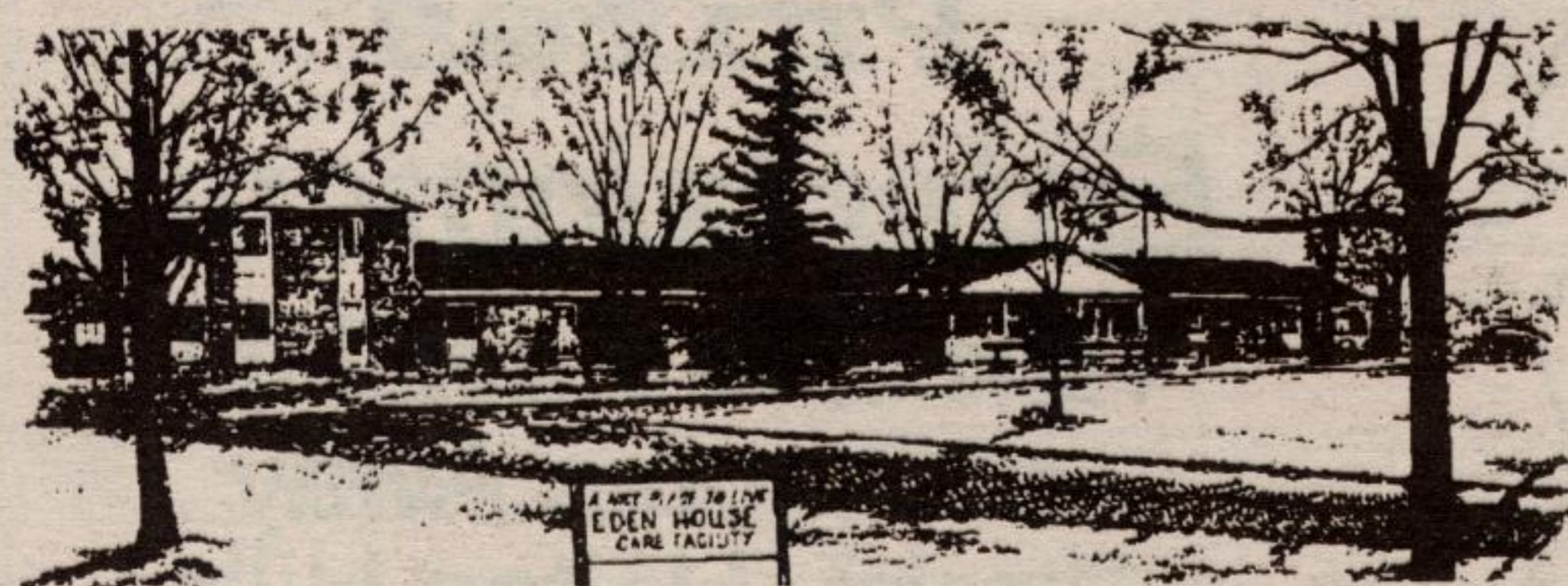
letter said. But apparently certain councillors were bouncing off the walls, as somebody in the Township office put it, when the letter arrived, so somebody at Queen's Park is tracking this issue."

No date has been set for the meeting between Council, the Friends of Eden Mills committee and staff of the MOT structural office.



JUST DUCKY! Eramosa Public School student Mandy Timmings, 10, isn't quite sure what to make of this wooden duck brought in by Grand River Conservation Education Rep Ron Bowman on Friday at the school's Earth Day. (Doug Harrison photo)

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