

Committee wants Rockmosa to pay for self in 2000

BY DOUG HARRISON
The Rockwood Miller

The Eramosa Parks, Recreation and Culture committee has a vision of Rockmosa paying for itself in the year 2000. The only thing standing in its way is a \$40,000 deficit.

Committee Chair Gary Martin says it's going to be a challenge for the 10-member committee, especially if the government con-

tinues to make cuts. But he feels it can be accomplished if the community gets involved.

Their first priority is to make substantial cuts to operating costs, namely the conversion of heating in the basement to natural gas from electric. The upper level has already been changed to gas from propane.

As well, some capital works have to be done to make Rockmosa

run more efficiently and attract more renters.

Other tasks include replacing the floor in the dance hall. While all this takes money, which isn't plentiful at the municipal level, Martin acknowledges that "if you don't spend money, the building will deteriorate more."

There is plenty of potential rental space in Rockmosa's basement, notes Martin, that currently

is being used for storage.

When Rockmosa was completed in 1977, there was almost a two-year waiting list to rent the facility. Now, the largest community hall in Eramosa Township is barely occupied once a weekend.

"We're losing to a lot of competition outside the Township," Martin concedes, adding the exterior to Rockmosa - which can accommodate 300 people - is well

built. "I think some businesses in town and in surrounding areas are going there."

"In the first 10 years it was rented almost all the time. You had to book a year in advance to get the hall. I think we can turn it around."

Rockmosa is owned by the Township, with the Rockwood and District Lions Club having paid a large portion of the mortgage.

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Some development charges to be waived

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Rockwood Miller

In a significant policy change designed to make Eramosa Township a more attractive place to develop, Eramosa Township Council voted to exempt all non-residential development from development charges for so-called soft services.

The charges - \$1 a square foot in rural areas and \$1.46 in Rockwood - are levied against new developments to pay for services like libraries, fire protection and recreation that are related to growth.

Deputy Reeve Dave Adsett questioned why the agricultural community had to pay the charges in the past and recommended that the charges not be paid on development on agricultural land.

"Agriculture is obviously a different livelihood with a lot of vari-

ables. It's not just like a business or a large factory," Adsett argued.

Eramosa farmer Earl Osborne offered a suggestion that was eventually approved by Council.

"If I had any anticipation of expanding an agricultural operation I would probably go to Nichol (Township) or Guelph or Garafraxa, where they don't charge development fees for growth on agricultural land. I wouldn't stay in Eramosa," Osborne said as he asked why Council didn't just collect development charges on residential development.

Reeve Rick Hughes agreed.

"It would make sense to extend the exemption to industrial and commercial development. We need to take whatever steps we can to encourage a climate for development in Eramosa," Hughes argued as he noted that having the charges may have cost the Township a chance to lure a major expansion of the W.C. Wood Company to Eramosa from Guelph.

Council asked staff to report back with a suggested amended development charge by-law, which will be subject to a public meeting in the New Year.

Treasurer Terry Noble noted that although there had not been any development charges paid since March of this year on any development except residential growth, Council's exemption could be significant if a large development was proposed on non-residential land.



FURRY CHRISTMAS GIFTS: The Rockwood Veterinary Clinic held an open house on Saturday. Here, employee Tish Lewis holds two kittens who would love to find a home for Christmas. As well, the cat underneath the Christmas tree would like a home. (Eve Martin photo)

Parade set for Thursday night

Rockwood's third annual Parade of Lights will roll through the village tomorrow (Thursday) evening starting at 8 pm.

The parade route of decorated farm machines stays mainly on Hwy. 7 from County Road No. 27 to MacLennan Street, with some side-street detours. The parade should finish by 9:15 pm. A storm date has been set for Friday (Dec. 22) in case of inclement weather.

Dottie's Diner opening Boxing Day

Dottie's Diner will soon be opening in Rockwood, replacing Buddies Restaurant, on Hwy. 7.

New owners Dot Polo and her nephew Kert Pinder will open their family restaurant on Boxing Day. It will be open from 6 am to 8 pm daily to start. The restaurant will specialize in homemade cooking, with take-out and a 10 per cent discount for seniors, says Polo, who used to run the concession

stand at Lloyd Dyer Park.

"This is something I've always wanted to do," she adds. "I love

cooking and I love people."


The diner's awning will read, "A dream come true," for Polo.

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