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THE HALTON COMPASS

REGIONAL NEWS, NOTES AND NEIGHBOURS

The War of the Board

More dissent at Halton District School Board

By BERNADETTE WARD

In yet another move that could fuel sentiments of a board at war with itself, the Halton District School Board split its vote down familiar lines, the end result being the deferral of the \$43.4 million Special Education Plan for 2005/08.

Burlington trustee and Vice-Chair, Peggy Russell brought the motion to the table at a board meeting held on July 7 to deal with the 2005/06 budget and the special education plan and read that the plan should be deferred until a new director of education has been hired.

"This would allow time for trustees to consult with the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) members or constituents if they so desire," said Russell.

The 6-5 vote in favour of the motion leaves the board in the position of working from the previous special education plan and reduced at least one frustrated trustee to the point of tears.

"To defer this plan is an insult," said Halton Hills trustee Ethel Gardner, who felt that the vote insulted the expertise, time and effort of SEAC.

The vote followed presentations by SEAC and a delegation from the Learning Disabilities Association of Halton, an organization not having a representative on SEAC and not in favour of the plan as presented.

Executive Director Heather Holden was concerned about the plan's overall vision as well as many of the details that she felt were missing.

"A plan that doesn't have a vision is going to short change kids," said Holden. "It's not an issue of pleasing people it's an issue of meeting needs."

She cited a lack of numbers indicating currently identified students, a lack of spaces for autistic and gifted children and opposition to mixed exceptionality classes. Overall, Holden indicated that her organization felt the plan did not meet ministry of education standards for special education plans.

Gardiner however, said that she felt SEAC was a very inclusive committee and noted that special education is a very challenging budget area.

"It's difficult to serve all students the way we want to," she acknowledged.

Other objections to deferring the plan were based on access to the \$40 million pot of money set aside by the provincial government. This funding is available to school boards, but must be applied for.

The primary concern was that submitting a special education plan late might jeopardize access to the provincial funds.

Carla Kisko, one of the board's outgoing superintendents, suggested that although criteria for applying for the funding has not been established, other boards will, of course, be applying for the funds.

Oakville trustee Mary Chapin, also opposed to deferring approval of the document, expressed concern about LDA of Halton's rejection of the plan but pointed out that



PHOTO BY JENNIFER ENRIGHT

Tough to lick this hat

Katherine Van Arem of Caledon shows off the candy hat her mom Debbie made especially for the Outrageous Hat Tea Party held in support of Halton Women's Place. See story on page 14.

special education documents can be altered.

"This is a much improved plan and I repeat that it is a living document...there are valid things that we could incorporate in the future," she said.

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Decision on Halton Hills truck complex deferred

By MANDI HARGRAVE

After seven years of attending meetings the decision regarding by-law 57-91 came down to agreeing or disagreeing to a deferral on the proposed truck complex for the residents on Fifth Line in Halton Hills.

At the Committee of Adjustment meeting on July 12 the residents were concerned with the proposed warehouse building and more concerned about the proposed truck terminal that would be built at Fifth Line and Steeles Avenue.

Their only objection to the warehouse building intended to be used as a water bottling facility was the application to amend the by-law maximum height requirement from 15.6m to 23.17m.

The reason for the application was, "To accommodate a proposed development that will require 3 silos of such height," as stated in the application from First Gulf Halton Hills Development Inc.

Chris Barré, Vice President of Development for First Gulf stated that the application was just about increasing the maximum height requirement in the by-law and nothing else.

Barré said the facility would be an, "Excellent use for the community and one that would generate a lot of jobs."

He expects the proposed water bottling facility to start off with about 50 employees and grow to 200.

Ken Lawday, a Board Member on the Hornby Association of Rate Payers (HARP) spoke on behalf of the area residents to oppose the application.

"The Hornby Association of Rate Payers is one of the many groups that have worked long and hard in the town of Halton Hills to ensure that development along the 401 corridor would be controlled and regulated closely," said Lawday.

His concern as well as the other residents is that the area will not be developed as a Prestige Industrial Development area because they think the proposed truck complex does not fall under that category.

After Lawday made his delegation, about 13 area residents stood up to say that they also opposed the application to amend the by-law.

The day of the meeting Terrace Glover, a member of The Town of Halton Hills Planning Department staff received a letter from Conservation Halton stating that they did not have any further issues with the application.

"As such please be advised that we do not have any objection to the approval of the application A05/023/H," read Glover.

The Chair of the Committee Members, Al Cook said that the town has been trying to create an industrial area for close to 20 years.

"We do need it within our community, so people do not have to commute to Toronto, Mississauga or other areas," Cook said.

Continued on page 3

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