

Defer sign variance request

By FRANCES NIBLOCK
The New Tanner

A key player in the Town's new sign bylaw is the first businessperson to ask for a variance to the rules, designed to rid Halton Hills of messy and dangerous portable signs, in favour of well-maintained permanent signs.

Last Tuesday, Herma Buchanan, representing Roos/Vision Travel in Georgetown, asked Council to overrule a community affairs committee decision denying a second permanent read-a-graph sign at the front of the travel building on Guelph Street.

The committee granted Roos/Vision relief from the bylaw to erect a permanent sign on the west side of the property and for a secondary ground sign, but not the proposed third sign.

Buchanan told Council that she could have applied for permits for temporary signs, but chose instead to work within the bylaw to clean up the streets.

"Wouldn't it be nice to have a well-made and designed message board out

there as an example to other businesses - a sign board that shows what can be done as an alternative to those cheap neon signs that you really don't like, and those are the ones you really want to get rid of?" Buchanan said.

She said Council's bylaw needs to support its unique businesses, or all that will be left will be big box stores. Buchanan also said the Town's solution of adding a read-o-graph sign to the existing permanent ground sign would be unsafe.

Georgetown Councillor Moya Johnson asked Council to permit the variance request, based on information that the property is only six feet short of what is required for the second permanent sign.

Wards 2/3 Regional Councillor Jane Fogal said to not consider the variance request, would be a "breach of trust," because the Town promised to look at variances to help make permanent signage work.

When staff said an additional 150-feet of frontage - not six - was needed for the second permanent sign,

Georgetown Councillor Ron Chatten said they need more information before making a decision about whether the variance request is a major or minor.

Acton Councillor Jon Hurst, who sits on the community affairs committee, listed five reasons why he voted against the variance for a second permanent sign, including the fact it would be much closer to the property line than other signs in the area and would be too close to the road.

Georgetown Councillor Bob Inglis said staff would be coming back with a review of the new bylaw in

six months and it would be prudent not to amend the bylaw with this variance, at this time.

Councillor Chatten urged councillors to be careful, noting they are willing to deal with individual requests for changes to some bylaws, but not others, like the smoking bylaw where they want the same rules applied equally for all.

"Let's be consistent," Chatten said, asking that the issue be deferred until staff reports on whether the variance request is major, or minor.

The deferral passed on a 6-3 vote.



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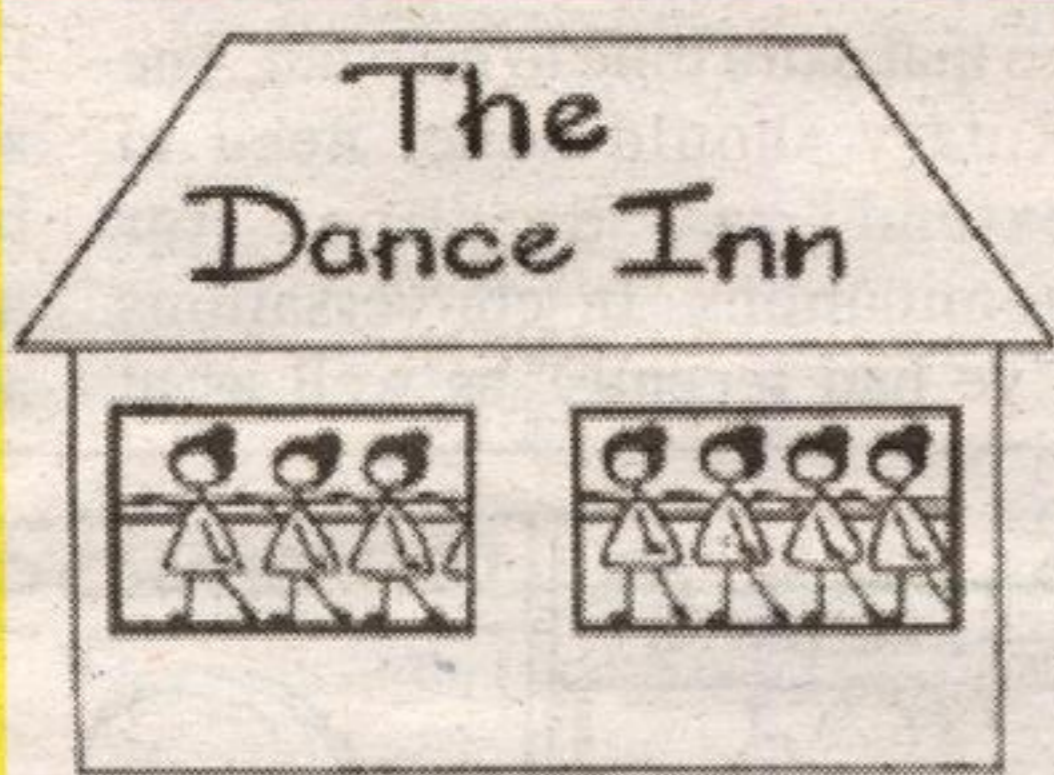
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