Council holds off putting Acton fire hall up for sale

BY CYNTHIA GAMBLE Staff Writer

The town has delayed putting the old Acton fire hall on the market, and will continue negotiations with Heritage Acton.

That community group, led by Dr. George Elliott at Monday's council meeting, wants the town to convey the building to them for a sum of \$2. In return, the group, which owns and restored the old town hall next door, will renovate the building, providing desperately needed additional office space for ASSIC, and in the future a live theatre stage upstairs.

Town staff in a report to town council Monday night recommended putting the old fire hall on the market

takers. The fire hall, located on Bower St., has been valued at \$160,000. Last spring it was declared surplus to the town's needs.

However, the majority of town council rejected the staff recommendation and instead supported a resolution to continue negotiations with Heritage Acton.

Acton Councillor Norm Elliott, who put forward the motion supporting the group's proposal, said the only way Heritage Acton can finish restoring the old town hall is if they can have some control over the building next doorthe two are "irrevocably linked."

But his Acton colleague Gerald Rennie preferred putting the building on the market.

"We need to find out if the building is marketable," he said. "We're building

get \$160,000 for the building, certainly one of things we have to consider is, that money is tight and that we could use the \$160,000 to offset the cost of the arena."

It was also suggested that the sale of the building could help the ease the stress of the 1997 budget cuts.

Towever, town administrator Ray King pointed out that it's Inot an usual practice to use the proceeds from a property sale to balance the budget. The monies are often used for future capital works.

That prompted Esquesing Councillor Kevin Kuiack to withdraw his support for the Heritage Acton proposal citing that money gained through the sale could go towards fixing a rural road.

Georgetown Councillor Moya Johnson, who is also budget committee chair, said tourism will be the future

life-blood of the small communities and this could be a potential winner.

"\$160,000 at this time is a lot of money, but once it's (the restoration opportunity) lost, it's lost forever....We have to find it in our hearts and in our budget to do this for the people of Acton and for the people of Halton Hills," she

Acton Councillor Rick Bonnette, a long-standing supporter of the Heritage Acton proposal, warned that if the building is sold to a developer, the result could be a high density dwelling on the site.

"It's not as if we have the \$160,000 and we've just lost it. That was just the potential of it, and we might not even get half of that ... so I want to put the councillors at ease, that they're not really going to impact their budget that much," Bonnette said.



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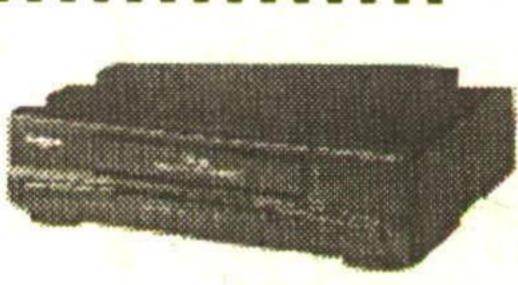
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