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Residents voice concerns about private school

It was standing room only at a public information session Thursday on a private school and equestrian centre proposed for rural Halton Hills.

Several residents took the opportunity to voice their concerns about the Keswick Sutherland School proposed for the Eighth Line (between 27 and 32 Sideroads). One of their top concerns was the increased traffic they said would be coming and going to the school impacting safety on the road.

At the session, held at the Civic Centre, Lois Fraser, who lives across the road from the proposed school, said the facility would generate enough traffic for 50 houses and she told the council members at the meeting that if Eighth Line is deemed unsafe they know it will cost millions of dollars to fix the "S" curve in the road.

"And if you spend our tax money doing that, we're going to be really pissed," said Fraser.

She said she was putting council members on notice that if they allow the application to be approved without fixing the road, the residents in the area won't stand for it.

"You're going to be sorry because there will be huge liability issues," said Fraser.

The 10,000 sq. ft. proposed private school for 150 students, founded by Jesus Cordoba and Callie Scheichl, is to be built on a 95.5-acre property adjacent to Scotsdale Farm and is to include an 11,000 sq. ft barn and stable, and approximately 40,000 sq. ft. riding arena.

A regional official plan amendment and Niagara Escarpment development permit are required for the application to be approved. A public meeting on the application will be held at Halton Region next Wednesday (Feb. 22) at 9:30 a.m.

Fraser stressed that the school is actually a private business, and that the equestrian centre is larger than the business that employs 100 people she and her husband own on Armstrong Ave.

"What this applicant is trying to do is build a business. This is not airy-fairy butterflies and grass, this is a business," said Fraser.

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The McKenzie family of Glen Williams has been overwhelmed by the offers of support from family, friends, neighbours and complete strangers after their home was gutted by fire on Sunday night. Fire officials estimate damage to the century-old home at \$300,000. No one was injured in the blaze, which took firefighters several hours to bring under control. Pictured are, from left, Jane McKenzie, Holden McKenzie, Scott McKenzie, Sarah McKenzie and family friend R.J. Hagen. Photo by Eamonn Maher

Family escapes blaze unharmed

A Glen Williams family lost their home and most of their possessions after fire gutted their Mountainview Rd. house Sunday evening.

From a neighbour's home Tuesday where the family is staying, Jane McKenzie said she was in the kitchen at approximately 9:30 p.m. when she looked up and saw "massive flames" above her refrigerator.

She called out to her two kids Sarah, 14, and Holden, 16, and R.J. Hagen, 16, who is staying with the family.

Her kids were in their beds upstairs and R.J. was in the computer room on the first floor. Sarah, whose bedroom was directly above the blaze, had pulled a plug out of the wall when she saw sparks coming out of the outlet, and ran downstairs.

With the smoke alarms blaring, Jane attempted to extinguish the blaze with a fire extinguisher, and in the meantime R.J. ran upstairs to wake Holden and get him out of the house.

"Thank God for R.J.," said Jane's husband Scott, who was vis-

iting a neighbour when the fire started.

The fire extinguisher didn't deter the flames, and when Jane attempted to call 911 her phone was dead.

With everyone, including dog Boston, out safely, Jane rushed outside and hollered to neighbours Scott and Sarah Simpson to call 911.

"If it had been a couple of hours later, who knows, we could be dead," said Jane.

See BLAZE, pg. 3

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