

Residents concerned new school would affect traffic, water use

Continued from pg. 1

She said while the Town of Halton Hills official plan permits small institutional uses on the property that serve the residents of the rural area, the proposed school "is going to serve people from all over."

"If we lived on a safe road and this was a public elementary school I would fully support it going in there," said Fraser.

"I am opposed to the region amending the (Official) Plan for a private school," said Eighth Line resident Arsenio Braga. "This is zoned agricultural/rural and it should stay that way."

Braga said he had almost been rear-ended on the Eighth Line because of cars coming too fast over a knoll on the road. He also said he had seen two cars and a bus hit a hydro pole on that road.

A 27 Sideroad resident, also raised concerns about the extra traffic generated by the proposed school and said there is a deer corridor on her road.

"I'd hate to see them relocate because of traffic," she said.

Another Eighth Line resident said the proposed school would not increase property values in the area, and would result in more traffic and noise.

Also raising traffic concerns was Maureen Smith of the Toronto Bruce Trail Club and area resident Mike Pearson who stressed the road already needs more attention.

He added, he didn't think the Town should underestimate the risk on that narrow road.

Kevin Maccoll, another Eighth Line resident, said there would have to be "a substantial leveling" of the road to make it safe.



An artist's drawing of the proposed Keswick Sutherland School on Eighth Line.

Maccoll also said if the school is approved area residents should be entitled to a significant tax reduction because of the impact to their neighbourhood.

Pat Thibodeau, a Grade 2 teacher at a public French school in Guelph who lives near the proposed school is also worried the traffic will increase dramatically if the school is built.

He said at his school, which has approximately the same number of students (150) proposed for the private school, there are nine buses and 174 vehicles coming and going each morning and afternoon.

"It's very naive to think 150 kids are going to come in three buses," said Thibodeau.

Howard Shropshall of the Eighth Line was concerned about response times to the school from emergency services.

"We don't need a private school,"

said Katherine Braga, a teacher, who lives beside the property where the school is proposed. "We have plenty of schools."

She also said an equestrian centre isn't needed either, and named several in the area.

"I don't want a school close to me, I don't need it," she said.

"I don't feel its necessary to build such a huge facility in the midst of nature in order to observe it better," said a Tenth Line resident.

Al Fraser, who lives across the street from the proposed school, said the applicants are proposing to operate their business on evenings and weekends as well as through the week.

"That's going to change the very basic nature of our neighbourhood," he said.

Water was a key concern raised by Acton resident Jean Hilborn.

She said water studies done by appli-

cants need to be redone as the water-pumping test was done in June 2003 when the water table is high. She was also concerned only a small number of area residents took part in the well study, and about the runoff from the paddocks at the facility.

"I think the safety of our water is at risk," said Hilborn, who suggested an alternative site the applicants should consider for their school is the former Speyside School on Hwy. 25.

Speaking in the favour of the school was Timber Ct. resident Kent McClure.

He said the school will provide the community with more education choices for their children and attract "high value" businesses to the area.

"Parents will not have to bus or car-pool their children long distances to other areas," said McClure.

"It will enhance the value of local properties," he said.

"I see a need for private schools at this point because of the cuts that have happened in the public school system," said a Peel District School Board teacher who recently lost the use of her music room at her school.

At the meeting the applicants showed a presentation on the proposed school and their planner Glenn Wellings said they had made significant effort to integrate the proposal into the natural environment.

He said the school would be located in the central pasture area of the property and wouldn't be visible from Eighth Line.

Wellings said if the school was publicly operated, instead of private, it would comply with the Regional Official Plan.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer



Cheque mates

Georgetown Scotiabank manager Harry Asbreuk (left) recently presented Halton Hills United Way volunteer Don Fitzsimons with a cheque for \$1,679, which was raised by Scotiabank employees during various fund-raisers.

Photo by Ted Brown

Blaze guts century-old home

Continued from pg. 1

Before firefighters arrived, next door neighbour Neil Gray, who saw flames from his window, attempted to put out the fire but was overcome by smoke and forced back outside.

He suffered smoke inhalation and was taken to hospital for treatment but has since been released. R.J. and Sarah also went to hospital to be checked out, but both were released.

A spokesperson for Halton Hills Fire Protection and Prevention Services said getting control of the blaze was a struggle for firefighters as it escalated quickly throughout the more than 130-year-old home.

Spaces left in areas where additional roofs were constructed in the old home, added major complications for the fire crews who worked in extreme weather conditions for hours to extinguish the fire.

"Staff confronted a very difficult challenge given the conditions of Mother Nature and the extent of the fire. The crews never gave up for a moment," said Chief of Operations John Martin.

The family has stayed with neighbours since the fire.

"Our neighbours have just rallied around. Everyone's been so wonderful," said Jane. "We've got some great friends."

The fire department said damage to the home is estimated at \$300,000 and the fire started in the kitchen area of the home. Jane said they believe the cause was electrical.

The family was fully insured and do not require assistance from the community.

Scott said they were very impressed with their insurance broker Paul Armstrong, who came to see them the next morning.


"He just put me right at ease," said Scott.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer
with files from Patti Post, special



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