

Residents concerned new school would affect traffic, water use

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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

Acton man the funniest in Canada— and that's no joke

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"If you're a white kid, why are you going to act black in Acton? I don't care if you're 50 Cent, it's pretty hard to look gangsta at a horse pull."

Growing up, McEnery said he knew he wanted to do something in entertainment and when he stumbled upon the Comedy Writing and Performance Program at Humber College while leafing through a course catalogue a couple of years ago, it sounded perfect.

So he signed up— honed his skills in sketch, physical and stand-up comedy as well as acting— and graduated last May.

"They gave me my start. It forced me to go on stage. I always thought I could do it, but I didn't have the guts to try."

He did his first stand-up set at Yuk Yuk's in September 2003, and said his material was "absolutely horrible."

That was pretty much the case until

his fifth time behind the mike when he cracked some jokes about his hometown.

"I just absolutely killed," said McEnery, who considers that performance the beginning of his stand-up career.

McEnery, winner last November of the Tim Sims Encouragement Award, a \$3,500 prize, at the Cream of Comedy Show held at Second City, said the Laugh Off competition from Feb. 6 through 12 was a "strange trip for him."

He entered as an amateur comedian but was eliminated in the second round in December.

So he decided to enter on-line as a professional comedian. The criteria was

he had to have made more than \$1,000 a year doing comedy, and thanks to the Tim Sims award, he qualified. From there he was selected at random to compete.



'It's the reason I think I was put here— to do comedy.'
—Jeff McEnery

"I was killing during my set last Friday," he said, and he just kept going when the fire alarm went off half-way through.

He had to face off in eight rounds and he said on Sunday he knew he had to have the set of his career, and he did, beating out eight professional comics to take the prize.

"There's just a certain point you just feel it on stage, you and the crowd are on the same page."

McEnery, who said he's incredibly

shy, and would much rather do a set than have a one-on-one conversation with a stranger, feels fortunate to be working as a full-time comedian.

"It's the reason I think I was put here— to do comedy."

Along with his appearances at Yuk Yuk's, McEnery appeared in the recent CTV *Many Happy Returns* ad campaign, and next fall will appear in the Family Channel series *Naturally Sadie*. He's also written a short film for the Comedy Network to be produced this summer.

He said Yuk Yuk's Great Canadian Laugh Off is set to air on the Comedy Network some time in the next couple of months.

"I'd like to become a household name. I think that's every stand-up's dream," said the young comic.


Looks like he's well on his way.

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer



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