

# Leathertown Festival.. in pictures



Organizers of the 15th-annual Leathertown Festival in Acton report a record turnout of about 10,000 people took in the Sunday event. (Above) Twenty-month-old Abygail Wilson of Rockwood was eager to make new friends at the Festival, while some attendees of the 'Gone Country'-themed event were just looking for something good to eat. Contests, live entertainment and dozens of street vendors were just part of the festivities, which included a Zero Gravity Circus street performer from Australia (right). At lower left, Cole Clarke of Woodstock (left) was the decided winner over Acton's Matthew Dunn in a tractor-pulling race, and there were no shortage of volunteer participants in the pie-eating contest in the 6-11 age group, which was won by Erin Hamilton. Next year's theme will be 'Rock On to Leathertown,' featuring music from the '50s, '60s and '70s.

Photos by Eamonn Maher

## Heritage designation put on hold Barber Mill meetings to continue

LISA TALLYN  
and CYNTHIA GAMBLE  
Staff Writers

Summer meetings between the Town, developer and residents pushed a final decision on the heritage designation of the Barber Mill property in north Georgetown to the September 5 council meeting.

Mayor Rick Bonnette said at Monday's council meeting new information from the meetings needs to be shared with council and Planning Director Bruce MacLean will prepare an addendum report for the September meeting.

Resident Jim Troy, who attended Monday's meeting, also requested that his scheduled address to council on the issue be deferred to September as well.

At the July council meeting, an effort by Councillor Moya Johnson to immediately put a heritage designation on the Barber Mill property was met with a threat from former mayor Kathy Gastle, a representative of the company that owns the site, to go to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).

In a report to council, planning staff had recommended not moving forward with the designation at this time, but Johnson, who is council's representative on the

Heritage Halton Hills (HHH) committee, wanted that amended so council could designate the property now.

She said council has received a HHH request to proceed with the designation earlier this year. HHH had originally recommended the Town apply for the heritage designation two years ago and at the time Barber Mill owner/developer Victor Boutin of Everlast Restoration Inc., agreed.

Everlast plans to restore many of the limestone buildings on the Barber Mill site (beside the Credit River on River Dr.) for commercial and office uses as well as constructing a 14-storey residential condominium.

"Council does have a responsibility to preserve and protect the heritage of our community," said Johnson. "I think it is one of the most significant heritage properties in our community."

She added it also has provincial and national significance.

The Barber Paper Mill is a late 19th century industrial complex that housed a papermaking operation, instrumental in the development of the Georgetown. In fact, the community was known for many generations as "Papertown". The Barber Paper Mill, in 1888, using a dynamo downstream, was

reputedly the first industry in North America to use electricity transmitted over a distance.

Johnson said if council decided to go ahead with the designation now, inclusions of additional buildings to be designated by the property owner later (a point raised by Gastle) she didn't think that would change the designation, and it could be amended then.

"If you went ahead with the designation tonight we would probably go to the Ontario Municipal Board," said Gastle, stressing it's premature.

Gastle, representing Boutin, said he is requesting the heritage designation be put on hold so he can work through several issues that will "dictate the ultimate form of development," including flood line analysis, traffic study and environmental and impact assessment studies.

Councillor Jane Fogal asked how a designation would hamper the owner of the property.

"To designate vacant buildings that we don't have a permit to redevelop?" asked Gastle.

"Yes that's the question," said Fogal.

"Well, I don't think it would be prudent for us to do that," said Gastle. "And, that's why we're saying it's premature."



An artist's rendering of the proposed Barber Mill redevelopment.

Councillor Joan Robson asked Gastle if it was "less desirable" for the owner of the property to develop it if it has been designated.

"We're just saying, let all the agencies comment on our studies, and also the recommendation of your staff to have our own heritage consultant to review the property, to have another opinion," said Gastle.

Councillor Clark Somerville agreed with Gastle, saying the designation now would be premature and that the designation is something the owner does eventually want, but he is just requesting more time.

"This is a dangerous road to

start going down," said Somerville.

Councillor Bob Inglis said he would not support the amendment to designate the property now because he could see downsides to it, particularly an OMB challenge.


In the end, Johnson was the only council member to support her amendment to designate now, and the only member who didn't support the staff recommendation that was approved to not proceed with the designation now, and to instead list the property as a priority candidate for future designation.

The developer is supposed to provide a heritage impact assessment to the Town of the property within six months.



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