

GO reconsiders move to cancel ticket agency after mayor complains

LISA TALLYN
Staff Writer

When Mayor Rick Bonnette heard the GO Transit ticket agency in Acton was on the verge of being closed he took immediate action.

Bonnette got on the phone last week to the transit company and attempted to persuade it to keep the agency, located in Acton Town Milk on Main Street, open.

It looks like the company was listening, because on Friday, Bob Boyle, GO Transit director of facilities, said an agreement had been reached with the new owners of the variety store to continue with the service, and there would be no disruption. GO Transit pays agency owners 5 to 10 per cent commission for selling the tickets.

Boyle said GO decided to reconsider closing based on discussions with the mayor.

"I can understand his (Mayor Bonnette's) argument for continuation of the current level of service for the residents of Acton," said Boyle.

The mayor was adamant he did not want the agency closed, calling it an "ill-conceived idea."

"GO was really going to be nickel and diming the people of Halton Hills," said Bonnette. "This would have been a slap in the face to Acton with a population of 10,000. My concern was if they do it in Acton, next will be Georgetown."

Bonnette said GO Transit is serving the public, and the provincial government spends millions of dollars advertising GO.

"A move like this would be discouraging people to use it," said Bonnette, who is very pleased GO Transit reconsidered.

Boyle said the company was intending to remove the agency from the variety store because sales volumes were low and could be accommodated by the bus drivers.

He said ticket sales growth in Acton had been "pretty stagnant" over the past five years, and over the past three months there was a monthly average of 140 transfers sold there. He said that equates to a one-person purchase per bus trip through Acton.

The transit company had done a review of all its agencies a couple of years ago and identified opportunities to renegotiate decreases in commissions and agencies that should be closed due to low sales, said Boyle. Acton was identified as one to be closed.

In the past two years the company has closed six agencies including ones in Port Perry and Bradford, said Boyle.

When GO Transit learned Phyllis and Sam Song were retiring and selling their Acton store, it appeared a good opportunity to close the agency.

"We recognize we've been in business and partnership with these agencies for a number of years and we didn't want to undermine the viability of their businesses," said Boyle.

"I was kind of upset because we're so proud of a small town having a GO agency here," said Phyllis Song.

She's pleased the agency is staying open under the new ownership of Soo and Angela Lee, who took over the store Sunday.

"I'm so thankful. I feel great. We're so proud to have it here," said Song.

(Lisa Tallyn can be reached at ltallyn@independentfreepress.com)



RICK BONNETTE



Fashion show fun



During the recent Blue Springs Spa annual gala fashion show at Acton Legion, Melanie Bray (above right) popped a prize balloon held by volunteer Emily D'Ambroso. The event was held in aid of the new Acton Agricultural Society Building Fund. Patrons were able to bid on various items (below) in the silent auction. Blue Springs Spa owner Kristine Cieslok (left) explained the bidding procedure to Lisa Appleby. (Left) Model Pat Yeatman showed her spunky side while modeling various fashions. *Photos by Ted Brown*



Deadlines altered for upcoming holidays

Readers and advertisers should take note that the *The Independent & Free Press* will have different publication dates and deadlines this week because of the Christmas holidays.

The following is the upcoming publishing schedule and advertising deadlines:

Thursday, Dec. 21 edition
Advertising deadline Wednesday, Dec. 20 at 10 a.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 26 edition
(Boxing Day)

Advertising deadline Wednesday, Dec. 20 5 p.m.


The Friday, Dec. 29 and Wednesday, Jan. 3 editions will publish as per the regular schedule.

The *Independent & Free Press* office will close for the holidays on Friday, Dec. 22 at 3 p.m. and will reopen Wednesday, Dec. 27 at 8:30 a.m.



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