

Council, planners differ on private school proposal

Continued from pg. 1

"We don't have the ink dry yet (on the Town's Official Plan) and we want to do an amendment" said Ward 4 Councillor Bob Inglis.

Mayor Rick Bonnette said council had to be consistent, and after recently turning down a similar application for a school on Clayhill Rd., council could not approve the Keswick Sutherland application.

"It's the unknowns," said Bonnette, pointing to the school's hours of operation and traffic.

The mayor, Somerville, Robson, Inglis and Councillors Bryan Lewis, Dave Kentner, Jane Fogal, Jon Hurst all supported Somerville's amendment. Councillor John Duncan didn't vote because he declared a conflict on the application. Councillors Mike O'Leary and Moya Johnson were absent.

On Tuesday, Glenn Wellings, planning consultant for the applicants, said, "we were surprised and obviously disappointed by the position taken by Town council."

"However, the Town in this case is strictly a commenting agency and we look forward to this matter going before Regional council," said Wellings.

He added they continue to believe in the planning merits of the application.

"Our experts along with those of the respective public agencies agree the proposal is technically feasible from a hydro-geological, wastewater and traffic point of view."

Wellings also said the application does conform to the Town's current Official Plan (1985) and the new Official Plan (not yet approved) recognizes a deferral on the lands.

At the meeting Wellings said the application process has been "very comprehensive."

He said the proposal is consistent with the provincial policy statement and conforms to the provincial Greenbelt Plan. It



Above is an artist's rendering of the proposed Keswick Sutherland private school and equestrian centre that Jesus Cordoba and Callie Schiechl (below) are hoping to build on Eighth Line. Halton Hills council unanimously voted down the proposal despite Town planning staff recommending the plan.

also isn't located in a prime agricultural area and is a use that's best situated in a rural area, he said.

Wellings said there has been significant public interest and support for the proposal, the majority of that coming from Halton Hills residents who live in the rural area.

Before making its decision council heard from several residents in the area who voiced opposition and concerns about the application.

Traffic, safety on the road, and impact on the water supply of surrounding residents were the main issues raised.

Arsenio Braga, who lives beside the proposed school property, said the "proposal will increase traffic" and "safety will become a concern."

Braga also said he didn't agree with the applicants' traffic study, and that it should have calculated for 70 or 80 per cent of the students being driven to school. He estimated the project could result in 714



to 774 trips per day to and from the school compared to the 320 cited in the traffic study.

He also said the Town staff recommendation included in the report that called for the NEC to defer its decision on the development permit for the school pending the establishment of zoning on the property by the Town wasn't fair and

questioned why a business application should receive preferential treatment when other residents have not.

Eighth Line residents Mark and Nancy Llewellyn said they were opposed to the school and stressed that the application didn't meet the Town or Region Official Plan.

Nancy Llewellyn was concerned about the development impacting neighbouring wells.

"Council must consider what they will do and the costs involved if neighbouring wells are affected by this business," said Llewellyn.

Eighth Line resident Lois Fraser said she didn't believe the application met the Town's Official Plan and the proposed school and equestrian centre "doesn't belong in any rural resident's backyard."

Al Fraser said he was most concerned about the traffic increase on the rural road that would result from the school. Also worried about the extra traffic was 27 Sideroad resident Leslie LaFontaine.

Three residents spoke in support of the application.

Eighth Line resident Darrell Parsons, whose property abuts the proposed school site, said he and his wife Kelly "are impressed with the project and its close attention and incorporation of the environment and agricultural components."

"We believe that the school will be of great benefit to not only the rural residents of Halton Hills, but the community at large," said Parsons.

"One of the main reasons I am in favour of this school is that it will provide students with an opportunity to learn in a setting close to nature," said area resident Kent McClure.

The Town's comments are the last the Region has been awaiting on the application.

Region staff is expected to report to Planning and Public Works committee on the application by June.

Plenty of snow allows CH to end low water condition

With precipitation amounts and watershed flows reaching more normal levels over the past few months, Conservation Halton (CH) has ended its low water condition.

The authority reports that average precipitation across the watershed was 122 per cent of normal in December, while January precipitation was 84 per cent of normal.

The three-month average from November to January was 98 per cent of normal. In addition, there has already been significant pre-

cipitation this month.

All watershed flows in December were more than 80 per cent of average, while January flows were at least 100 per cent or better.

Last month, CH downgraded the low water condition for its watershed from level two to level one.

Although precipitation amounts were normal over the past three months, an unusually dry summer and fall during 2007 had an impact on local streams and rivers.

Precipitation during fall and winter months typically provides important recharge for groundwater aquifer levels and contributes to base flow in creeks and other surface water bodies.

"Traditional snowfall amounts... will allow us to enter the summer of 2008 with the watershed in reasonably good condition," said CH watershed planner David Gale.

"If we enter 2008 with a dry spring like we did this past year, when rainfall amounts were as low as 50 per cent of normal,

then we could end up having to declare a low water condition again."

Demand for water is typically lower during the winter months but Conservation Halton is still encouraging watershed residents and businesses to practise water conservation and good stewardship of water and its sources.

CH operates four reservoirs in its watershed, including Kelso, Hilton Falls and Scotch Block on the Sixteen Mile Creek and the Mountsberg reservoir on the Bronte Creek.

The conservation authority's reservoirs supplement summer flow rates in Bronte and Sixteen Mile creeks by augmenting natural flows with the stored water from these reservoirs.

The reservoirs account for the majority of summer base flows in both Sixteen Mile and Bronte creeks.

CH will continue to monitor conditions in the watershed and provide updates as necessary.

Up-to-date information is available on CH's website, www.conservationhalton.on.ca.



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& Ges



Lisa Allen and Doug Sponagle are thrilled to announce the engagement of their daughter
TIFFANY
to
KYLE HOTHAM
son of Kevin and Jackie Hotham.
Wedding to take place
May 23, 2009.
Congratulations to You Both!!

Ain't
It
Nifty,
Jeff
is
turning
Fifty!

Love Irene,
Erin, Matt,
Matthew, Sara,
Samuel!



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