

Cinemas' planned closure sparks public outrage

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A full-paying tenant has been found— Dollarama— he said, which intends to relocate to the theatre, and renovate. The current Dollarama location would be divided up and leased to two or three new retailers, said Leduc.

Those tenants have not yet been confirmed.

"Nobody wants to operate a cinema at the going rent," said Leduc.

Yesterday (Thursday), Irani said he would be willing to negotiate the rent, (not up to full rent however) and suggested perhaps the Town of Halton Hills could be approached to provide a tax break for the mall owner.

"We're open to reasonable negotiation. As long as the city is willing to contribute, the landlord is willing to contribute, I'm willing to contribute," said Irani.

"It's too late," said Leduc.

He said a deal has already been struck with Dollarama, which is expected to take over the theatre location on August 15 and reopen in September.

"I would be surprised if the city (town) was going to give a tax break," said Leduc. "I don't believe in Santa Claus."

Leduc also said it "doesn't make sense" for the company to

continue leasing at half price rent," unless we become a charitable organization."

He said it was "very sad" the theatre was closing.

"It was our intention to keep the cinema. But (longtime former owner of the theatre) Danny Edwards (couldn't make a go of it), then Eric Ball (of Cambridge's Independent Booking Slide Screen, which managed the theatre for Toronto-based Premier Theatres, the company that took over from Edwards) called me and said I cannot make it," said Leduc.

Leduc said he understands it's important for Georgetown to have the cinema "but the exercise has showed that this business is not a viable one in Georgetown."

"We feel we have given it more than our fair share of efforts to keep it alive," and we're facing "yet another bankruptcy concerning the same tenant and had to look for another retailer that could occupy the space."

Georgetown resident Marc Surette, a regular at the theatre with his daughter, is upset the theatre is closing. He's set up a website at www.townchronicles.com where area residents can sign the petition to save the theatre. About 500 signatures had been collected as of yesterday.

"The biggest loser here is the kids," said Surette.

Surette supports the tax break idea and said, "there's got to be a million solutions."

Georgetown resident Silvana Bezina is also fighting to keep the theatre open.

"We're all shocked," said Bezina.

She said she feels "at ease" taking her children to the theatre and the price is right at \$6.50 for adults and \$4.25 for children.

She said they collected about 400 signatures on the petition at the theatre Tuesday evening and that she and others intend to picket in front of the theatre next Tuesday.

Glen Williams resident Janet Bailey, a mom of five, has distributed a flyer calling for help in saving the theatre.

"I like it because it's safe. I've gone to Brampton Silver City. I've had things thrown at me. I've had friends who have had kids beat up after leaving the theatre."

Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette has heard from several area residents looking for his help in keeping the theatre open and understands their "disappointment."

"This is a business decision. Having said that, I will express our disappointment to the company and ask if there's anything



Sorab Irani (left) and his wife Shahrzad, shown last year after taking over management of the Georgetown Cinemas, are upset that, unless they can negotiate a deal on their rent, they will be forced close the cinemas next week with a Dollarama store taking over the Guelph Street location.

File photo by Ted Brown

that can be done to assist the movie theatre in remaining open."

He's asked plaza owner Sunstone Realty Advisors to

reconsider their decision to not continue the lease.

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

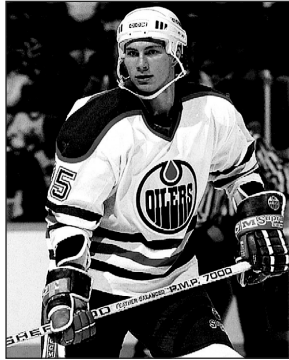
HALTON HILLS SPORTS MUSEUM

2008 Hall of Fame Induction Gala

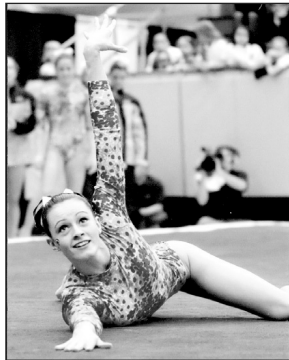
Date: Thursday, June 12, 2008
Location: John Elliott Theatre



Gerry Ockenden



Adam Bennett



Katie Rowland



John Toebes



Melanie Jans



Special Guest Speaker: **Melanie Jans**

Join us at the Induction Gala.

6:00 pm - Reception

7:00pm - Induction Ceremony

Tickets for the gala ceremony can be reserved through Glenda Nixdorf at 905-873-1360.

