

MSB not for sale...

Continued from Page 1

"Now is the time to work together and what we want to do is have the school board rescind this very ill conceived idea," Bonnette said, noting the board made its decision with no input from any interested parties and he feels "betrayed."

Bonnette said although the Town has first right of refusal to purchase the surplus site, it would be "morally wrong."

"The old Town of Acton bought the school site in 1958 for \$5,000, and in 1969 or 1970 the site was absorbed by the Halton County School Board. We already paid for it – why would we pay for it twice," Bonnette said,

adding he hopes that "common sense" will prevail and the board will rescind its decision.

Acton Villa Soccer Club president Ian Watson expressed "astonishment and concern" with the proposed MSB lands and noted that the biggest external user of the fields at MSB is the soccer club which now has over 1,000 active members. He said on each of four nights every summer week, between 210 and 270 children play on the MSB soccer fields.

Watson said the club has worked hard over the years to provide the Town with \$150,000 to help build new superb soccer facilities and the club has

had a good relationship with the school board that now seems to be making decisions that don't show long-term planning and sense of community responsibility.

"So, this proposal is out of character for the school board as we have known them in the past and it does make you wonder about other decisions that may be considered in the future by these individuals to whom we entrust the education and well-being of our children," Watson said.

He criticized the school board for not selling the vacant Speyside School property, allowing it to crumble and deteriorate and lose value and now



Mayor Rick Bonnett spoke at the assembly last Monday of his feelings of betrayal that the issue of MSB land sale would be raised again, pointing out that although the Town would have first chance to purchase the land, the Town of Acton purchased the land in 1958 which was then absorbed by the Halton School Board in 1969 or 70. It would amount to paying for the land twice.

- photo courtesy of Bob Jefferies/TV Cogeco

attempting to sell a portion of the MSB site that is used by many citizens of the town.

Melissa Secord, chair of the MSB school council said they are baffled why the school board would stress daily fitness while reducing the playground area and deeply disappointed by the decision and the fact it was made with no stakeholder input.

"We understand the difficult decisions the school board must face in managing its growth and accommodation. But it should not be made on the backs of our students who actively use their facilities. This is not a half empty school," Secord said, noting enrollment is over 700 students.

The MSB school council met with school board officials last night to express their concerns about losing their "field of dreams," and Secord said they asked a lot of questions but didn't get a lot of answers.

"We want to know what rights we have and what options are available to us," she said, adding they've formed a sub-group of the school council to deal with the issue and lobby school board officials.

"That property is loved and used and we are very

passionate and emotional – but still professional – about saving it," Secord said, adding people can help the fight to save the land by logging on the council's website – msbcouncil@hotmail.com – and the school's Facebook page.

Former Acton Councillor Norm Elliott, looking at the large crowd that included quite a few children, was pleased by the "grassroots reaction to insensitive bureaucracy." He said nine years ago the potential sale of

MSB lands was probably one of the most incendiary issues of the day that galvanized the community to ask the board to reconsider.

Comparing the community versus the school board as a "David and Goliath" battle, Elliott said it was very admirable when people put together this sort of outrage to ask the board to reconsider.

On Monday night, Town Council asked staff for a report on the status of all school property in Halton Hills.

School sites for sale

The Halton District School Board recently added eight properties to its list of surplus properties – making a total of 15 – and will attempt to sell them to meet a Ministry of Education directive to reduce its holdings to be eligible for additional provincial funding for new capital projects.

The Board hopes to raise approximately \$43-million dollars by selling the 55 acres. At the January, 7 meeting, school board trustees voted to list the following properties:

- Speyside P.S., Halton Hills, 4 acres, built in 1959, 19,532 square feet
- Laurier elementary site, Milton, 4 acres
- Portion of General Brock HS, Burlington, 26.59 acres with approximately 15 acres to sell
- Palmer elementary site, Burlington, 4.45 acres
- Parkway belt, Oakville, 5.37 acres
- 1-Portion of White Oaks North campus, Oakville, 16.47 acres with approximately 3 acres to sell
- 2-Portion of White Oaks North campus, Oakville, 16.47ac with approximately 10 acres to sell
- Lorne Skuce PS, Oakville, 7 acres, built in 1953
- Portion of McKenzie-Smith Bennett PS, Acton, 15.3 acres, size to sell to be decided



Sweetheart Packages
at
blue springs spa
519 853 8859

Come and Gift Your Love!

GIFT CARDS
Available in any Denomination

<p>\$79 Sweetheart Package Rose petal Pedicure, Hair wash and blow dry</p>	<p>\$159 Sweetheart Deluxe Chocolate Body Wrap, Rose petal pedicure, Hair wash and blow dry</p>
---	--

9 Mill Street, Acton | www.bluespringsspa.com

We stock a full line of SICO
Paints, Hardware, Electrical
& Plumbing supplies

Leathertown
LUMBER

264 MAIN ST. N ACTON

519-853-1970

Enter to Win
FREE HOCKEY
TICKETS





FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED

HOURS
Mon-Fri. 7:00am to 6:00pm
Saturday 8:00am to 4:00pm

FREE LOCAL DELIVERY

FAX LINE: (519) 853-2542
TORONTO LINE: (416) 601-1259