

Who Does It

Protest driving range

Faced with a storm of protest and a barrage of letters strongly opposing a golf driving range on land near Steeles Avenue between the Seventh and Eighth Lines, Halton Hills general committee changed their minds and voted to repeal the bylaw which would have permitted the driving range. The decision must be endorsed by council next week, before taking effect.

Eighteen individual letters and a form letter signed by 30 rural residents were sent to the town offices, and Monday night approximately 35 people jammed the gallery.

Dan Matthews, speaking on behalf of the residents, emphasized the united opposition of the residents, and the North Halton Association for the Mentally Retarded, the Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee and Julian Reed MPP.

He said he had learned the applicant, Val Shaw Driving Range, had now switched the proposed access from the Eighth Line to the Seventh Line and termed the move "an attempt to appease the residents."

He claimed the lights would be blinding and shine into the yards of residents on the Eighth Line. He claimed similar driving ranges in other areas, and particularly Mississauga, had broken windows in homes at a much greater distance than 250 yards and backed his statement with photographs.

He claimed the driving range next to the NHAMR residence, Countryside, would be harmful and stressed they had not been notified until he called it to the attention of town staff.

"Local residents are furious and feel council is using its power callously," he stated. He claimed a rezoning to allow the driving range would wreak havoc on the neighbors, and would add traffic to already busy roads.

Jim Reid told general committee the property in question is 300 feet from his house and 500 feet from his barn. He pointed out it adjoins the Countryside residence for the retarded and suggested the land is too short for a driving range.

Reid emphasized water is scarce in the area, and said Countryside hauls water daily. He said another well and water for a putting green would deplete existing wells.

Reid said he had seen no plans for property fencing, to keep people or golf balls from his farm and his cows. He predicted harassment from the noise and lights if the plan is approved and said it would be unfair to the Countryside residents to subject them to lack of privacy.

He concluded by stating he was distressed that council gave the bylaw third reading without consulting with the surrounding neighbors.

The letter from the North Halton Association for the Mentally Retarded explained one of the reasons for locating the residence in the area was the proximity to ARC Industries and the country setting with a minimum of urban activity. The letter claimed a driving range would interfere with the learning environment, and could attract the residents decreasing the effectiveness of the various training programs.

Matthews said Mike Evans, NHAMR president told him there is only one supervisor at night at Countryside, and felt it would be more difficult to supervise the residents if they are attracted to the lights and snack bar.

Peter Branch, a member of the Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee, said at the time of their decision they did not have a great deal of information, so felt it advisable to support the group. He suggested any decision should be delayed until more information is available.

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