

School board looking at selling surplus lands

By DENNIS SMITH

Special to The Champion

Selling off surplus land is the latest tonic suggested for the Halton District School Board's accommodation difficulties.

The board is seeking ways to build new schools in growth areas. But provincial capital funding is not available unless the board eliminates capacity surpluses of 1,800 elementary and 3,200 secondary spaces.

Oakville Trustee Lynn Roberts has proposed the board consider sales of surplus land as a less divisive means of fundraising than closing schools to reduce capacity.

"This would allow us to provide bricks and mortar and we could have savings in reduced transportation," she told last week's accommodation management meeting. "And it's important to address the issues in growth areas and established areas separately."

Superintendent Gerry Cullen told trustees that, recently, boards were limited by a regulation stipulating they could not sell any land parcels worth more than \$50,000. But this regulation was recently put to rest, he said.

"Our expectation was we would revisit our list (of surplus lands) and bring back potential ones for sale," said Mr. Cullen, adding he has concerns about these proceeds being used for new schools.

The superintendent said it could take six months to one year to

sell any particular property.

Burlington Trustee Sheila Flook said she liked Ms Roberts' idea, but was concerned about her suggestion to construct schools immediately.

Too much risk

"What would happen if the land didn't sell?" Ms Flook asked.

Ms Roberts said provincial top-up funds for operating costs could bridge the gap until surplus lands sold.

Staff have previously recommended using top-up funds for new schools and Mr. Cullen said he believes the board has authority to do this. The province is expected to send the board a letter of confirmation on the matter.

New RC schools coming on stream

Thousands of Halton's Catholic elementary students will enjoy spanking new school facilities come September.

Four new Catholic schools are due to open this year, while another three schools will receive major additions or renovations.

In Milton, a new school will replace the aging Holy Rosary, while Georgetown's St. Francis of Assisi will receive major alterations due to be completed by mid-May.

In Oakville, construction is underway on two new schools in the north end of town. Both

"Staff has referred to this as a source of funding to kick start new schools," said superintendent Wayne McNally. "But it's not what you want to hang your hat on the long run."

Trustee Marianne Hawthorne of Oakville was cool to the idea. "It's far too risky, since the money for the sites and disposal of the sites is not guaranteed."

The committee eventually approved Ms Robert's motions that administration report on the process of selling the surplus lands, disbursing proceeds for capital projects and using the funds raised to purchase elementary schools for Oakville's River Oaks area and south Georgetown.

These two areas are among four suggested by staff as priorities for new schools.

are scheduled to open by September 1999.

North Burlington will also see the opening of a new school in the Millgrove area. Construction has started on the school, which is scheduled to open for the 1999 school year.

Major renovations to

Burlington's St. Patrick and Ascension schools are also slated for August completion.

A new funding formula from the provincial government has provided the overcrowded Catholic school board with access to capital funding for new school construction.

Religious Service Directory

Ready for the 'Countdown to 2000!'

Submitted by: Reverend Dan Rogge, Senior Pastor of New Life Church, Milton

Many individuals within our society possess new mindsets, modern paradigms and fresh approaches to traditional concerns. The church is challenged to keep up with the times, to maintain a modern relevancy and to address current issues, yet, not to compromise the truth of the unchanging gospel.

Perhaps you have heard it said: "The more things change, the more they stay the same!" Methods of modern ministry may change, but the message remains the same! The method is not sacred, the message is!

While many churches are learning to confront the culture, and are engaging in pro-active ministry, the challenge of reaching a new generation is daunting.

Conditioned by video games, today's child expects a continuous change of direction, constant motion and anticipates a greater level of excitement around every corner. If there's a pause in the action, or if an activity has lost its excitement, they are quick to say "this is boring!" and before you know it, they have mentally checked out and moved on to something else.

As we "Countdown to 2000!", how can today's church meet the needs of today's child?

Today's child loves action, adventure, mystery and intrigue! Songs and children's chorus can have actions assigned to them. Bible stories can be dramatized, complete with villains and heroes, depictions of bravery

and cowardice, love and jealousy. By distributing some simple costumes, a narrative comes alive. Today's child will more readily understand the age old concepts of Scripture if they have had the opportunity to put themselves into the shoes of these historical figures.

Today's child is desperately searching for caring individuals who will take time out of a busy day to listen, to love and to communicate with them. Death, separation, abandonment or divorce has fractured many families. Today's child must be given the opportunity to open up and share the heartfelt emotion that lies just beneath the surface.

Today's child needs to be educated, not just entertained! A church's life-changing ministry will do more than titillate the emotions, it will touch the heart with the transforming power of the gospel. Games can be used effectively to introduce a lesson, yet, a steady diet of

entertainment alone will leave children spiritually starved, hinder their Christian walk and stunt their spiritual growth. As we examine the life of Christ, He did not entertain His disciples, rather He involved them in ministry. Let's look for opportunities to do the same! Let's challenge children with ministry opportunities, within the church and community. Let's assist them, believe in them, empower them! It works!

Mom! Dad! Today's child needs you! Make an investment into the future of your child by involving them in a church near you! Attend with them! Help them to establish a strong moral and ethical base upon which sound decisions may be made! Today's church is seeking to meet the needs of today's child, but the truth is ... Today's child needs YOU!

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the Church on the Hill 878-2411
Rev. Dr. Mark McDermott

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Children - Mrs. Natalie Rogge
Worship/Jr. High - Mrs. Esther Kossler

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9:45 A.M.
Sunday School for Every Age Group

The Salvation Army Church
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Pastors:
Captains Dan and Wendy Broome

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9:30 AM
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11:00 AM

Weekly Programming for all ages
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9:00 am, 10:30 am & noon Sunday

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Mass at 10:30 a.m. Sunday

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Jesus answered, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.
John 3.3

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Have you ever wondered why you are here on earth?
Have you ever wanted to make a difference in the lives of others?
Do you wonder what the keys are to being successful in all areas of your life?
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BAHA'I

PRAYER

"It is the language of the spirit which speaks to God. When, in prayer, we are freed from all outward things and turn to God, then it is as if in our hearts we hear the voice of God"

- from the Baha'i writings

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Email: cboyce@interhop.net