

# Town in tune with spirit of proposal

By IRENE GENTLE  
The Champion

A proposal to ease up on the rules governing home businesses in the rural area led to a tug-of-war between modern economics and old fashioned charm recently.

The Town's administration and planning committee grappled with the issue after learning of proposed changes to Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) guidelines on home industries in the escarpment area.

Currently, the regulations state that the operators of cottage industries and home occupations must work out of the actual home.

Home industries, on the other hand, can take place in an accessory building provided it is targeted for the surrounding rural/agricultural area.

The softened version of the plan would allow cottage industries and home occupations to expand outside the actual dwelling.

### Some restrictions

As well, home industries would be able to serve a broader based clientele than under the present guidelines.

Though committee agreed with the flavour of the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) proposal, it voted to plug in some restrictions.

For example, home businesses must still be operated by household residents only, allowing no more than two outside employees.

Also, home industries should continue to primarily serve the rural/farming community.

Debate on the issue was largely split down urban and rural lines, with rural councillors seeming more eager to embrace the change.

"I guess when I see the NEP being modified to be less stringent, I'm quite elated," said Councillor Lieven Gevaert. "What they are trying to do should be applauded."

Softened guidelines will make it easier for rural residents, he said.

"I think anything the NEC does that will make life a little more livable is a good thing," said Mr. Gevaert.

Home businesses are a fact of life that should be recognized in both the rural and urban communities, said Councillor Cindy Lunau.

### Bylaw worries

"It's just a reality that more businesses are going on at home and people need to survive," she said. "But I wouldn't want to look at broadening our assessment base at the rural area without looking at what is going on in the town as well."

Councillor John Challinor worried that the NEP modifications could interfere with the way the Town does business.

"I'm personally concerned that what they're proposing will supercede our bylaws," he said. "This could make it eventually difficult for us to enforce our bylaws."

Mayor Gord Krantz argued that the escarpment land is so enormous the NEC had to create generalized regulations.

He said he didn't mind tweaking the NEC proposal to fit Milton's needs.

"It's so diversified that they can only

deal with it through a broad brush," said Mr. Krantz. "We can be more specific here in Halton."

Recognizing home businesses just makes sense, said Councillor Wally Hunter.

"I think the intent of the NEC is to get people with modems working at home instead of being part of commuter traffic," he said. "My view is the way the economy is going, there's going to be more and more of this kind of thing and I think that's a positive thing."

Rural traffic could increase if the businesses encourage non-rural clientele, said Councillor Ron Furik.

"That's not what I think the rural area is for," he said. "It would create too much traffic with clients coming in and out."

"It's just a reality that more businesses are going on at home and people need to survive."

— CINDY LUNAU



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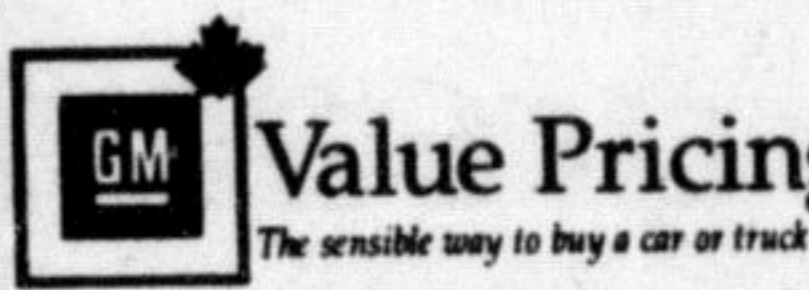
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