

✓ Bloom winners to be announced tomorrow

Milton is aiming to gain national status when the winners of the Communities in Bloom competition are announced tomorrow, said Joy Anderson, co-ordinator of community development.

"We've never achieved national status. You start at the provincial level, then can move to national and then international. This year we're aiming for national."

For the past two years, Milton has been just shy of reaching the national level. Milton is competing against other Ontario towns in the population category of 20,001 to 50,000.

"I think the judges were pleased," Ms Anderson said, adding she'll be one of several committee members on hand

when the winners are announced in Stratford. "They saw some things that were unique to Halton (Region) like the Dufferin Aggregates site. That was different for them."

Communities in Bloom judges Martin Quinn and Ted Blowes toured the town with members of Milton's Communities in Bloom Committee August 16. In judging the town, emphasis is placed on the variety and use of trees, shrubs and flowers along with the appearance and upkeep of private and public green spaces and residential gardens.

It also focuses on environmental awareness, tidiness and the care and protection of heritage buildings and sites.

Town ready to take land severance battle to OMB

By RICHARD VIVIAN
The Champion

Contesting a decision by the Committee of Adjustment, the Town of Milton is headed for the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).

Town staff are concerned a retirement lot severance granted to Angelo Gardin by the committee July 26 will set a precedent leading to further fragmentation of agricultural land.

"The criteria for land severance are very strict. The purpose, of course, is to maintain the agricultural land base without a number of severances dissecting the area," explained Mel Iovio, director of planning and development. "If a severance is approved for someone that isn't a bona fide farmer, works only a portion of the property, this could apply to many, many more land owners in our rural area."

In a decision by the administration and planning standing committee Monday, the Town intends to appeal the approved severance on the 21-hectare farm located west of Fourth Line and south of No. 25 Sideroad.

The severance would create a 0.82 hectare property for the creation of a bungalow in which Mr. Gardin intends to live now that he is retired. Town council is expected to ratify the decision Monday.

At the heart of the matter is the interpretation of "bona fide farmer," a term used in the Official Plan in determining whether a retirement lot severance is permissible.

According to Town staff, the 21-hectare farm — 17 acres of which is currently farmed — is unsuitable to

produce enough revenue for a farm family to suitably live. Producing a suitable income is a requirement of recognition as a "bona fide farmer."

"I continue to be concerned about the fragmentation of lots in our rural area. It concerns me that there may be any number of people who can come forth with similar suggestions that they have been market gardening or market farming for some number of years. It would in fact then qualify them for similar separations," said Councillor Cindy Lunau.

But according to Bruce Ketcheson, representing Mr. Gardin, the property is suitable to produce an average gross income of \$35,000 annually through the farming of specialty products like garlic. Farm incomes under \$50,000 occur regularly in south-western Ontario, he continued.

"It was an active farm operation and, I must say, a successful farm operation," he argued. "The \$35,000 figure is within the range of typical farm family income in reality in south-western Ontario, including the Halton region."

A sticking point for Mayor Gord Krantz, the only person to vote against appealing the severance, is the fact that Mr. Gardin combined two properties into one parcel when he first purchased the land in 1973.

"I understand that when it comes to these types of applications there are not and should not be a cookie cutter-type approach," he said, adding that the definition of "bona fide farmer" is "open for interpretation" and an appeal could lose at the OMB.

The Region of Halton is also appealing the severance.

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