

CN proposal to be probed at hearing

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The group has also approached both Halton regional council and Milton town council for support on four and six occasions respectively.

But because no application has been made, legal advice to both councils has recommended against publicly supporting or opposing CN's proposal. To do so would harm the integrity of any position they may assume following a review of technical information

contained within the application.

"We continue down here at the Region and the Town to prepare... in anticipation of an application being made," said Mark Meneray, Halton's director of legal services, adding a team of consultants are reviewing the information in CN's original proposal — delivered publicly February 19, 2001.

The Town, Region and CN have each pledged \$100,000 for technical expertise needed to review CN's

application. Once an application is filed, involved parties have 120 days to review and respond to CN's proposal before a hearing is held at the CTA office in Ottawa. The Town, Region and RAIL have all requested party status in the application review process — requests which sit unanswered until the application is filed.

"We're doing as much research as we can in preparation of that (application filing). Once it's been filed,

that's not the time to do it. I'm sure there'll be piles and piles of stuff to go through (in the application)," said Ms Post.

A solicitor will also be needed to represent RAIL during the review hearing — something the group estimates will cost its 150 plus members between \$30,000 and \$50,000. Though no specific activities are planned just yet, RAIL intends to conduct a series of fundraising events for the cause.

Anti-bully program promotes respect

By DORA ZHANG

Special to The Champion

Last spring, after requests from numerous teachers for an anti-bullying, anti-harassment program, the Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Services of Halton came up with 'A Matter of Respect'.

Designed to raise awareness around issues of harassment and bullying, and teach students their rights and responsibilities as well as self-respect and respect for others, the program was piloted in the Halton Catholic District School Board in April, 2000.

"We sent flyers to all the elementary schools and the responses were overwhelming," said Lynda Levins, education co-ordinator for the intervention service.

"There are 107 elementary schools and 23 high schools in Halton, and we see ourselves as the link between schools and the appropriate services within our community," Ms Levins says.

The initial focus of the program has been on grade 7s and grade 8s.

"Teachers felt that the kids should have this information prior to entering grade 9," said Ms Levins. "By the time a youngster is in (grade) 5 or 6, they have developed major personality traits, be they good or bad. Even grade 7 or grade 8 are in some cases too late."

The classroom program kicks off with a discussion about community values and individual rights and allows students to have a frank and open discussion.

"We ask the students if they have ever harassed or bullied anyone," Ms Levins explained. "Most hands go up eventually, including the presenters. The students are asked to identify the areas of violence in society — physical, sexual, verbal etc. — and are encouraged to go into specifics."

They also discuss being on the receiving end of bullying, something most students have experienced. At the end of the presentation the class is asked to come up with a slogan or a motto to put up on the board as a daily reminder of how their behaviour affects others.

"Our purpose," Ms Levins says, "is not to go into the schools in a punitive manner, but to educate (the students), let them know which behaviours could get them in hot water with the law, school, human rights etc. in the hopes that they will think twice before they open their mouths and call someone a name."

The goals of the project are not just to raise awareness on issues like bullying, but also to teach students to recognize oppressive behaviours and the root causes of violence in society, to create a less violent community, and to inform them of the support processes that are available.

Ms Levins said she feels strongly that 'A Matter of Respect' and programs like it can have a long-term effect.

"We teach that everyone has a right to be safe, free from harassing or oppressive behaviours, and we stress that they have rights, as does everyone, and along with those rights comes a certain accountability for one's actions and inactions," she said.

"It's vital because the things kids learn today will carry them through the rest of their lives."



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