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6:30 pm: Displays and Refreshments

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Proposed west-end shopping plaza prompts some concern

By **Melanie Hennessey**
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

A proposed new 'big-box' shopping centre in west Milton drew mixed reactions from local residents Monday evening.

The citizens shared their thoughts on the potential 12,000-square-metre retail/commercial development from Trenwith Investments — planned for the northwest corner of Derry Road and Bronte Street — during a public meeting at Town Hall.

In a rare twist of events, Bronte Street resident Alma Gildea kicked off the session with positive comments on the centre.

"This is definitely a good move for Milton," she said. "I know how desperately we need something here. The new subdivisions are going to need somewhere to shop."

She noted it would also provide employment opportunities for youth who live on the west side of town.

But several Clovercourt Crescent residents weren't as optimistic, like Marla Marnoch.

"The nature and volume of traffic in the area is going to change dramatically," she said.

"There's going to be idling cars and pollution in our backyards."

She added that while she does support the development of the land, she doesn't feel the large scale of the shopping centre is appropriate.

Neighbour David Philp dubbed the proposal a "hodgepodge of retail space and a parking lot."

He also said he thinks it would create "traffic chaos" in the area.

And fellow Clovercourt Crescent resident Natalie Kanbergs said to her, the plan "reeks of Mississauga."

She cited concerns with potential noise and gridlock the centre could generate and also pointed out it would block her view of the Niagara Escarpment.

Lawyer Aaron Platt, who represented a numbered company that owns property in Milton, argued the development could harm the pre-existing designated commercial sites in town.

He also pointed out that a recent retail commercial demand study completed for the Town recommended against this type of development at the northwest corner of Derry Road and Bronte Street. Council didn't support that recommenda-

tion.

Meanwhile, Ward 2 candidate and downtown business owner Peter Haight said it's "time to protect the downtown from the invasion of box stores."

"It's beginning to feel like 'ring around the downtown core,'" he remarked. "I'd like to see the spiritual centre of town grow."

In addition to Gildea, the only other person who spoke in favour of the shopping centre at the meeting was Paul Puopolo, who represented the developer.

He emphasized the fact that Sobey's has been secured for the site and that a major grocery store is needed in west Milton.

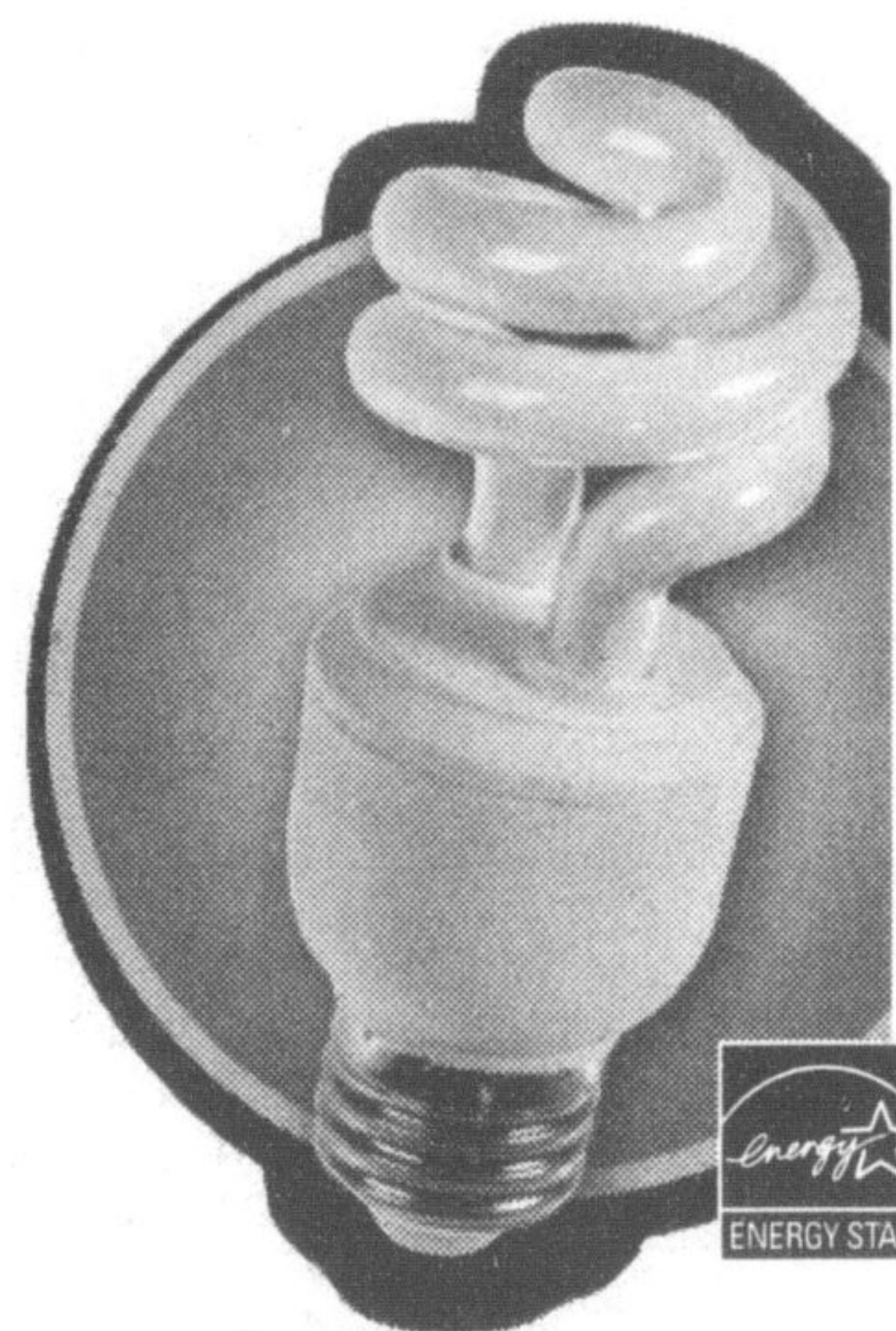
Ward 3 Councillor Jan Mowbray questioned the developer's proposed entrance to the shopping centre on busy Derry Road so close to the intersection of Bronte Street, noting it seems to go against good road practices.

Meanwhile, Ward 4 Councillor Wendy Schau asked what thought has been given to ensuring enough space is left to create the planned railway underpass on Derry Road.

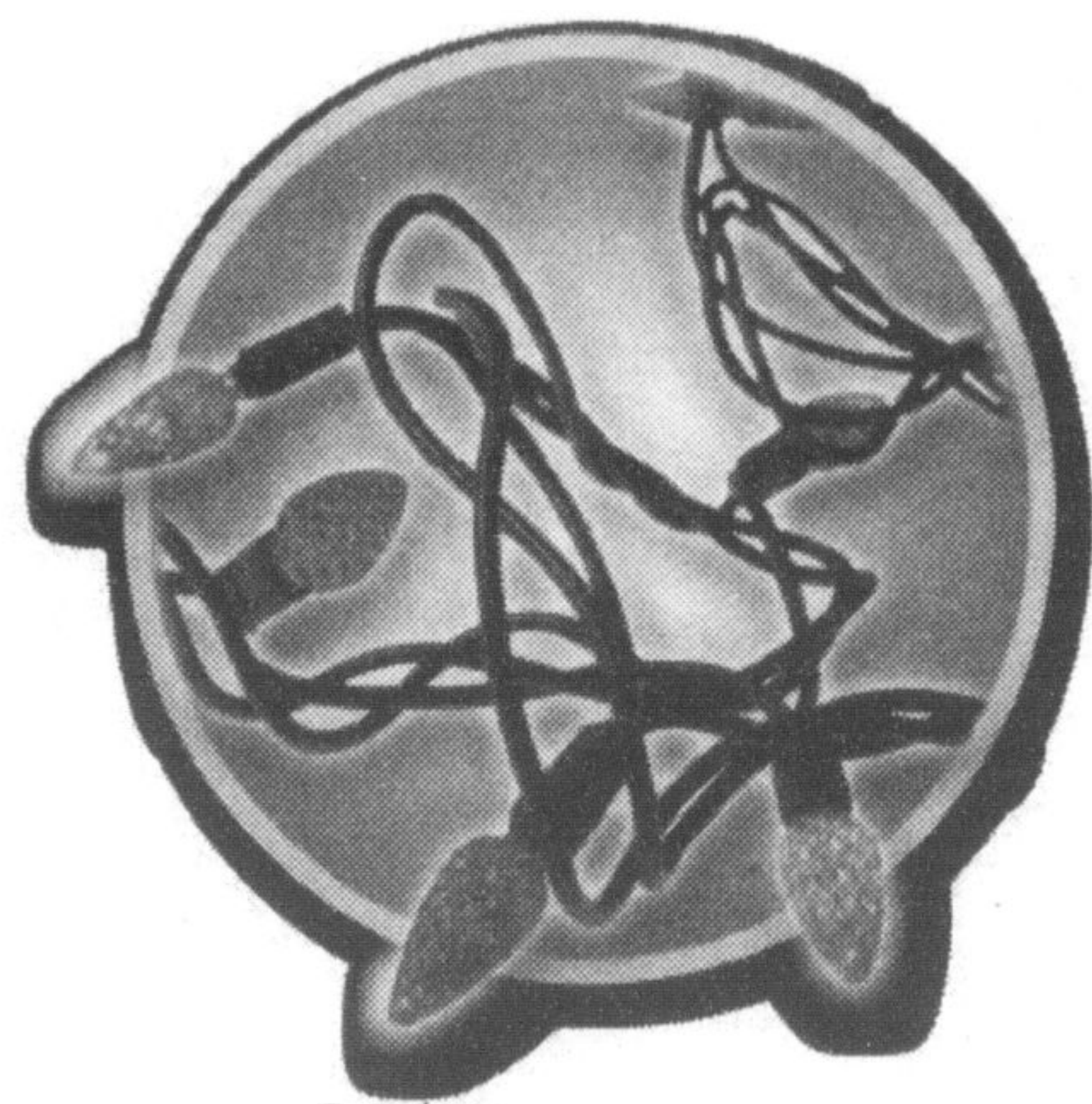
Puopolo told her discussions have been held with the Region

• see RETAIL on page A13

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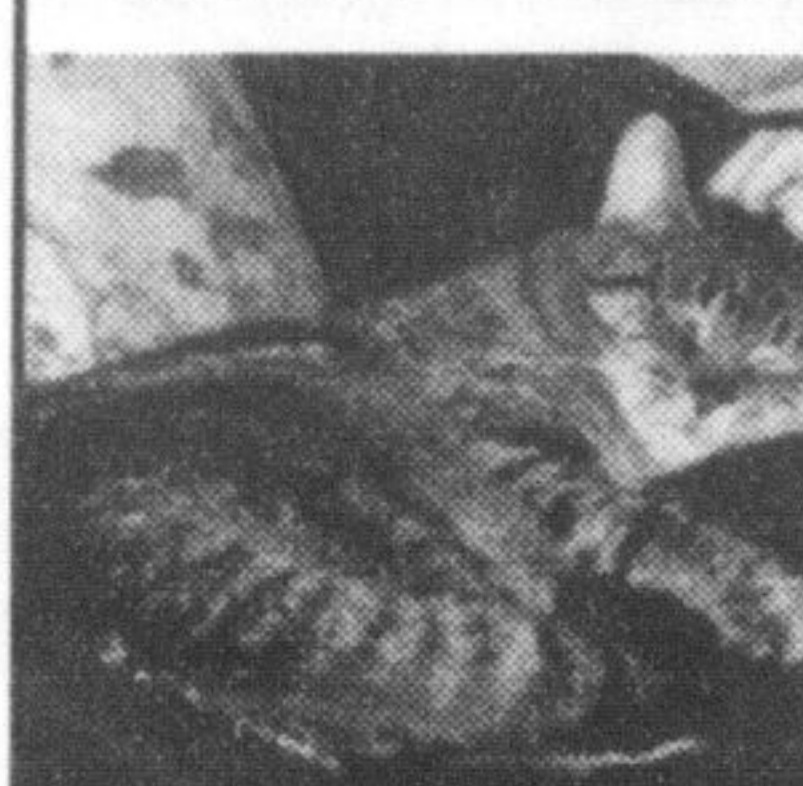
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