

Town will take further action to force clean-up at garage

By ROE KELLY

A wary group of town councillors pored over a proposed agreement with entrepreneur Mario Durante as if they were a group of used car buyers Monday night. And right in the middle of the sales pitch, the competition showed up to question Mr. Durante's business practices.

That was enough to put a temporary hold on the deal.

Mr. Durante, acting as M. Durante Enterprises, owns a gas bar complex north of Highway 401 on Highway 25. Scattered around his land, in and outside of a fenced compound, are cars. Complaints have been levelled against Mr. Durante for creating an eyesore.

Mr. Durante's son Dennis appeared before council's general committee Monday night to vow that his father will clean up the property. In fact, before councillors was an agreement drawn up by Milton planning staff calling on Mr. Durante to do just that.

Dennis Durante said the proposed agreement was in his family's best interests because they own land behind their business, which they hope to develop as part of Milton's burgeoning industrial park. Sales have already taken place on tracts nearby, and roads are scheduled to penetrate the northwestern corner of the industrial area by 1990.

Negotiations were sticky but reasonably positive up until the point where Dennis Durante concluded his speech to councillors. Several politicians had listened with cocked eyebrows and three had either complained of Mr. Durante's past performance when dealing with town imposed conditions or suggested he put up money as a condition of the agreement.

Then Steve Moffatt, a Nasagaweya wrecking company

manager, stood to speak. Mr. Moffatt said he was representing several area wreckers.

Mr. Moffatt said Mr. Durante "has no intention" of abiding by council's wishes. He indicated Mr. Durante cannot be trusted to act in good faith on such an agreement. "Good faith is not part of what this man is made for on Earth. He laughs at town council and you people."

It is against Milton bylaws for Mr. Durante to run a wrecking yard, since he does not have a licence. Mr. Moffatt contended that auto wrecking is a substantial component of Mr. Durante's business.

"It's definitely a wrecking operation. It's blatant wrecking. He cleans up for two months, then it's back to the same situation. It's going to go on forever and a day."

"Mr. Durante receives vehicles from owners in lieu of towing charges. At that point they should go to wrecking yards. That's our business, not his. He does it because he knows he can get away with it."

Mr. Durante has towing contracts with both the Halton regional police and the OPP. He collects derelict vehicles, those impounded by police and those damaged or written off in accidents.

Dennis Durante said his father is willing to enlarge his current car compound substantially and surround it with board fence until 1990, when he expects to move it further back from the highway. The newer compound, to be constructed when roads are laid into that part of the industrial park, will also be concealed by boards, Mr. Durante said.

"I don't feel the enlarged compound is going to correct the wrecking," Mr. Moffatt said. He added that the Durante's would have carte blanche to do as they pleased

within the concealed confines of board fencing.

Mr. Durante said he was not running a wrecking enterprise. He and his father sell used cars and car parts, he said. "Nobody can stop me from selling used cars."

After the meeting he said he had a mobile car crusher come to the property on two occasions "just to get rid of them." Nodding curtly in the direction of his accusers, he added, "jealousy is what it is and that's all it is."

Town bylaw enforcement officer Bill Bamford told councillors Mario Durante had denied operating a wrecking yard in conversations with him. He said Mr. Durante indicated it was a "salvage" operation.

Mr. Bamford said the mobile crushing machine came to the lot in order to clear away the vehicles which had become an eyesore. "I agree it was wrecking, but the end justified the means."

While Dennis Durante argued that because industrial development in the area is imminent it will only serve the family's best interests to spruce up their land for sale, councillors consistently harkened back to previous arrangements proposed with the Durante's.

In 1984 an agreement between the town and Durante Enterprises called for landscape upgrading which was never completed, councillor Barry Lee said. "I don't have much faith in a verbal guarantee" of performance, he added.

Councillor Art Melanson said the situation has been "an ongoing problem for four or five years."

In a motion which was approved, councillor Bill Johnson called for a further staff report in two weeks which will include a legal opinion outlining a potential agreement with M. Durante Enterprises.



Photo by JOHN WARREN

Strings attached

Students at Martin Street School were well entertained Monday when the David Smith Marionettes paid a visit. The group came to Milton from Kingston for the performances.

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DESCRIPTION	WAS	NOW	DESCRIPTION	WAS	NOW
84 HONDA ACCORD LX, 5 spd., red	8,595	7,295	84 RELIANT WAGON, Auto., white	5,995	4,995
84 FORD TEMPO, Auto., blue	6,995	5,295	83 TOYOTA CELICA, 5 spd., blue	7,995	6,595
84 DODGE ARIES, Auto., silver	6,955	4,595	86 MERCURY MARQUIS, Auto., silver	13,995	12,595
84 OLDS CUTLASS, Auto., grey	8,555	5,995	84 BUICK SKYLARK, Auto., white	6,995	5,595
84 TOYOTA PICK-UP, 5 spd., white	5,595	5,595	86 HONDA ACCORD, 5 spd. blue	10,995	10,650
87 PONTIAC SUNBIRD, Auto., blue	9,995	8,195	87 HONDA PRELUDE, Auto., grey	15,995	13,595
87 NISSAN SENTRA, Auto., cream	11,995	8,495	84 FORD TEMPO, Auto., silver	5,995	5,995
86 MERCURY TOPAZ, Auto., black	6,995	6,995	86 FORD MUSTANG GT. CONV. Red	16,995	16,995
			85 AMC ALLIANCE DL 5 spd., Gold	4,995	4,995

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