

Council greets affordable housing quota with derision

By ROB KELLY

The province's proposed 25 per cent affordable housing quota was greeted with derision at Milton council's general committee meeting Monday night.

Milton planning staff have written a report that will form part of a joint Halton regional response to Queen's Park. Town planning director Bob Zsadyani called the 25 per cent quota "virtually unworkable" in Milton because of the lack of servicing.

Mr. Zsadyani also called on the province to assume more of a share in the program, rather than passing the responsibility off to

municipal and regional governments.

Councillor Colin Best asked if there had been any further contact with Queen's Park about the report "besides just mailing it off."

"We've had three sets of meetings with the ministry (of housing) people" Mr. Zsadyani replied. "Some were pretty gruelling. We did achieve a few things we were hoping for. But it was like pulling teeth out of an elephant. They were not the happy, easy type of staff meetings we would like to have."

Mr. Best said said all the municipalities surrounding Toronto want to build housing. But restrictions in the ministry plan are "incredible."

Housing prices are driving first time homeowners out of Milton, the councillor said. "The people I grew up with here live in Cambridge and Guelph."

Mayor Gord Krantz cast a skeptical glance at provincial initiatives given such experiences as the one endured by Milton's Rotary Club. They plan to build affordable housing in cooperation with the province.

Following a long set of delays the club's Bronte St. housing project "may or may not put a shovel in this Spring," the mayor noted. "It's disheartening to the Rotary Club."

Speaking to the myriad of provincial

regulatory agencies, Mr. Krantz added, "if the ministry of housing doesn't get you, the ministry of the environment will, or some other ministry."

The mayor painted a picture of testy exchanges between Toronto area municipal staff members and ministry of housing officials. "Mr. Zsadyani is certainly being diplomatic when he mentions some of his workings with the ministry people."

Councillor Art Melanson said Halton "as usual is lagging way behind" in the provision of affordable housing. "Halton is certainly perceived as a high class area to live, if you can afford to live here."

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