

# Bid to rezone church for offices draws opposition

By ROB KELLY

One of the most controversial pieces of property in Milton again came under the scrutiny of municipal council Monday night as a group of local businessmen obtained permission to re-model a church as professional offices.

But they didn't get that approval without opposition, as longtime Milton resident Ivan Slessor told council he would much rather have the former Emmanuel Baptist Church on Commercial Street stay a church, no matter what denomination.

A former member of the Baptist congregation, Mr. Slessor said "it really bothers me to think we will take the Lord's house and turn it into a place of business."

Mr. Slessor is a retired car dealer, reputed to be a man of substantial financial means, and is given to humorous anecdotes which he willingly and vocally shared with council.

In apparent support of churches in general, Mr. Slessor confessed that "I used to be a reprobate but I had my ways straightened out when I was young... in my 30s."

Mr. Slessor said he "didn't know the church was for sale," or he "probably could have scraped up the money myself," to buy it.

Voicing similar sentiments was

Reverend Bryan King, pastor of a Milton-based Lutheran congregation which worships at a local primary school because it has no church.

Reverend King said his church leaders had expressed interest in the property but "our little congregation has been outbid by commercial investors. Is the best interest of the town going to be this thing being a commercial investment?"

In a letter to Milton planning director Bob Zsadyani, Lutheran Church representatives maintain that when local entrepreneurs closed the deal for the property they were caught off guard because they felt their offer was still being considered.

Church officials had backed off pursuing the matter on the advice of representatives of the vendor, Emmanuel Baptist Church, because a controversy over severances of the land had not been resolved, the Lutherans told Mr. Zsadyani.

In August, 1988, the Lutheran offer was returned without comment and church officials learned that Lampp Holdings, the consortium of local businessmen, had bought the property, their letter stated.

Lampp Holdings paid \$325,000 for the property, said lawyer Derek Presse, a member of the consortium. The church offer had been for

\$290,000.

Mr. Presse told council "the church had been for sale over a year," and "negotiations (with the Lutheran group) had fallen apart a month before" Lampp Holdings had its conditional offer accepted in March, 1988.

As for Mr. Slessor's concerns, "we made extreme efforts to contact the neighbours," including two sparsely attended public meetings and hand-delivered notices to all homes within 400 feet, as required by law. Mr. Slessor lives just beyond that radius.

Mr. Presse said the renovated building will house professional offices for the five members of Lampp Holdings, who are involved in financial services, accounting, insurance, and law.

The development will be limited to such "conservative, dignified kinds of services," Mr. Presse noted.

"It is not our intention to sell the property. We are not speculators. We were not trying to out-negotiate the Lutheran congregation or Mr. Slessor."

Lampp Holdings intends to spend approximately \$250,000 in renovations on the development. There will be 9,000 sq. ft. of renovated office space, which they hope to have ready for occupancy in August, 1990.



After a last-minute change that promoted Leanne Caputo from first runner-up to first place in the local Miss World Canada pageant, she went on to win the national crown at Winnipeg.

## Hong Kong next ...

from CAPUTO on page 1

The national competition was a gala event featuring a fashion show, aerobics display, musical guests as well as a dinner and dance.

A former Toronto Argonaut cheerleader, Miss Caputo owns and runs the Dance Gallery on Main Street where she teaches tap, jazz and ballet. She is also currently training at the Toronto Dance Theatre.

Originally, Miss Caputo's reign as Miss World Canada wouldn't have been possible because she lost in the preliminaries. Instead, named first runner-up, she received the chance to compete in the national competition when the winner, a contestant from Waterdown, became ill.

Given 12 hours notice to prepare, Miss Caputo left for Manitoba on Thursday.

The five-week preliminary contest, in which Miss Caputo originally won first runner-up, was held at Club 2000 in Norval September 21. About two dozen other similar competitions were held across Canada.

In three weeks, Miss Caputo will leave for Hong Kong where she will spend a month before competing for the Miss World crown.

"It will be hard being away from my family and friends for a month, but I'm looking forward to the pageant," she said.

The title of Miss World means cash, prizes and year-round travel and modelling opportunities valued at more than \$200,000.

The Miss World Canada Competition, held for the last 38 years, was sponsored by Casio Canada in association with JPL International Inc. and Domini Sportswear Ltd.

All proceeds will be donated to Variety Clubs of Canada to assist handicapped and underprivileged children.



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