

House to be replaced by semi despite protest

By ROB KELLY

Despite the protests of a neighbour at municipal council Monday night, Gus Mowbray won the right to knock down his bigger home and make way for two smaller ones.

Mr. Mowbray's home sits on approximately one acre on Ontario Street just north of Laurier Avenue. In building the semi-detached home he hopes to live in one half while renting the other half to a family member. In essence, it will be Mr. Mowbray's retirement home, he told town staff.

However, some of his neighbours oppose the construction of what they see as a precedent-setting "intensification" of land use, that is, putting more housing on lots which previously catered only to single-family residences.

The chief opponent, or at least the most vocal, was John Challinor, who lives on nearby Towland Crescent. Mr. Challinor told councillors the proposal will spark "a domino effect" along Ontario Street in the area with others applying for similar permits.

Therefore Mr. Mowbray's approval "will spell the end" of one of the few "distinctive professional and or executive-level neighbourhoods in this

community," Mr. Challinor warned.

He and his neighbours have "paid a premium" to buy houses backing onto the ravine between their homes and parallel Ontario Street lots such as Mr. Mowbray's, Mr. Challinor said. Enjoyment of that green space and property values will be eroded as Mr. Mowbray and others build up their nearby lots, Mr. Challinor added. "I am here to protect my investment and the quality of life my family and I enjoy."

He said the town's planning department has taken "an apparent quantum leap" by supporting Mr. Mowbray's initiative.

Town planning director Bob Zsadyani didn't see it that way. He said the proposal is in line with provincial calls for increased housing densities, that Milton needs more residential housing, and that controls such as only allowing one driveway will be imposed to minimize traffic congestion.

Council was almost equally divided on the issue. In fact, Mr. Mowbray only got his approval when Mayor Gord Krantz voted in his favor to break a 5-5 deadlock. Before the vote, however, several councillors staked out pronounced positions.

Ward 3 representative Bruce Attenborough sided with Mr. Challinor. "Everybody has a right to get up in the morning and not see the character of their neighbourhood changed. I don't think it's the kind of thing we should promote. I don't see any great benefit to the community."

Ward 2 councillor Les Laughren, alluding to the fact Mr. Mowbray now sometimes stores equipment from his fuel business on the property, said, "if we can clean it up I think it's a plus."

Councillor Rick Day attempted to get an amendment to the approval

stating that only Mr. Mowbray and family members could live in the new residences. That failed.

Councillor Art Melanson spoke out against those who would shackle development of housing, almost any housing, in Milton. "I can't believe all these terrible things would happen along Ontario Street if this development comes through. Surely we need those units. We need more than that. Everbody seems to take the NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) approach."

The fight is not over if Mr. Challinor can help it. He told councillors

in a letter that approving Mr. Mowbray's plan "will motivate our neighbourhood, with its considerable human and other resources, to oppose such a decision most vigorously and with much enthusiasm."

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