

Protect the NEC says environmental lobby group

By ROB KELLY
The Champion

An environmental lobby group is attempting to convince Halton regional councillors to overturn a decision that backs slashing the powers of the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC).

Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources (POWER) president Barbara Halsall said she would address regional council today (Wednesday) in a bid to see last week's planning and public works committee resolution defeated. The committee said the NEC should transfer its land use responsibilities to regional government.

Currently the NEC oversees and enforces environmental planning for the Niagara Escarpment through land use hearings. But the Niagara Escarpment Landowners Coalition (NELC), another lobby group, contends the NEC is a bloated bureaucracy that often makes poor hearing judgements, victimizing small property owners.

Ms Halsall, on the other hand, depicts the NELC as controlled by profit-oriented land developers, not homeowners and farmers frustrated by bureaucratic inertia.

Ms Halsall and "15 or so" other demonstrators picketed at Halton's administrative centre in Oakville Monday to publicize their concerns. In a subsequent interview, she said NELC members are "absolutely salivating" at the prospect of having regional governments assume a large part of the NEC mandate.

The NELC always opens their presentations to various

regional governments with the statement that "they want to protect the escarpment," Ms Halsall said. "They want to protect it just long enough to get their profit from the land."

But Glenn Schnarr, a spokesperson for the NELC, said last week "at least 90 per cent" of the group's members "have no intentions" of developing their land for profit. They are just residents who have endured "considerable frustration in dealing with the NEC" over modest proposals such as creating a church parking lot or replacing a burnt-out building.

Ms Halsall said the NELC overture is "the first step in getting rid of the Niagara Escarpment Commission altogether."

One of the weapons in the NELC arsenal was an Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) judgement rendered by A.J.L. Chapman. The OMB hearing officer, in approving a Halton Hills development proposal opposed by the NEC, was highly critical of NEC guidelines in that case.

"I'm not saying the (Niagara Escarpment) Commission never makes any errors," Ms Halsall pointed out.

"Let's just fix those problems. Let's not say, all of a sudden, we will not have the commission because it's not perfect."

The POWER president warned that if the NEC is stripped of its umbrella organization features and land use approvals are yielded to the numerous regional governments along the escarpment, patchwork environmental controls will be the result as different standards are applied in various jurisdictions.

"They (the NELC) want to protect it just long enough to get their profit from the land."

Barbara Halsall

"Let's just fix those problems. Let's not say, we will not have the commission because it's not perfect."

Barbara Halsall

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BARBECUE BASH - NOVEMBER 21, 1992

Join us as we "Celebrate The Escarpment" at Chudleigh's Apple Farm in the first annual Niagara Escarpment Landowners Coalition (NELC) Barbecue-Auction Fundraiser.

As you know the road to success has not been an easy one. But with the strength and support from our membership — now exceeding 600 — NELC has achieved success in obtaining municipal support in many parts of Ontario. We wish to say thanks and get ready for the next round.

For just \$5.00 per person or \$20.00 per family, you will be eligible for numerous door prizes, a tour of Chudleigh's Apple Farm and all the barbecued food you can eat. We will also be showing "A Piece of the Rock", our documentary that has received positive response each time it has been aired.

But, there is more. Many prizes will be auctioned off. Some of the prizes already obtained include weekend ski packages and free green fees at many of our golf courses (you may have to wait until it gets a little warmer to enjoy this prize).

A good time is guaranteed, so join us Saturday, November 21, 12:00 noon, at Chudleigh's Apple Farm. They're located in Milton on the west side of Highway 25, 2 miles north of the 401. Don't worry about the weather! Proper shelter, heating and hot food and drinks will be provided.

As always your donations to the cause are welcome to cover our administrative costs.

TO RESERVE YOUR TICKETS

Call the NELC office at (416) 529-9059 or
Co-Chairs Lois McClure at (416) 873-1487 and
Francis Benson at (416) 689-8066.

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PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE PROPOSED RECONSTRUCTION OF GUELPH LINE (REGIONAL ROAD NO. 1) FROM McLAREN ROAD SOUTH TO HIGHWAY 401, IN THE TOWN OF MILTON (HAMLET OF CAMPBELLVILLE)

A Public Information Centre will be held:
Date: Thursday, November 19, 1992
Time: 4:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.
Place: Campbellville Lions Club
Main Street, Campbellville (Upstairs)

The Regional Municipality of Halton is planning to reconstruct the Guelph Line from McLaren Road South to Highway 401 in the Town of Milton. The proposed road reconstruction will generally follow the existing Guelph Line alignment with improvements to the horizontal curves and vertical profile grade. As part of this project, separate left turn lanes are proposed for the crossing roadways of Campbellville Road/Campbell Avenue and Crawford Crescent. The project is being planned as a Schedule "A" undertaking in accordance with the requirements of the Class Environmental Assessment for Municipal Roads.

This meeting will be of specific interest to those owners and tenants whose properties front onto Guelph Line. Design plans will be available for review and comments will be elicited from the public. The Information Centre will be an informal meeting where interested members of the public will be able to drop in at their convenience to discuss the project with representatives of the Region. Subject to the comments received as a result of this Public Information Centre or this Notice, contract plans will be finalized.

If you are unable to attend this Information Centre and have questions regarding the study, please contact:

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