

Town worried defunct plant will fester environmentally

By ANGELA BLACKBURN
The Champion

The abandoned site of the former Pigment & Chemical company wasn't mentioned but must have lurked in town councillors' minds last week as they heard staff review proposed provincial guidelines for contaminated site clean-up.

A staff critique of the guidelines, designed to be followed voluntarily by the property owner with minimum Ministry of Environment & Energy (MOEE) involvement, has staff worried because it appears to apply only to viable sites — not "orphaned" sites — ones which are for all intents abandoned.

"There is a conspicuous absence of any type of mechanism to deal with an orphan site," building and enforcement director John DeVries told the Town's general committee.

Mr. DeVries complained the guideline is tailored to viable development sites. "Often orphaned sites are in the greatest need of remediation," he said.

"Structures on the site tend to focus the attention of the community, draining its resources as a result of vandalism, arson and other associated health concerns," said the report.

Good deed at orchard

Williams Orchard on Third Line will donate the excess apples you pick to Feedback Canada on Thanksgiving Day.

"Because many people pick more apples than they need, they can donate their excess on the spot to Feedback Canada," said Pat Christmas of Canadian Feed the Children.

Feedback Canada, the domestic program of Canadian Feed the Children, supplies more than 50,000 pounds of fresh produce per month to about 50 Ontario agencies and groups that cater to the hungry.

Williams Orchard is on Third Line, north of Regional Road 9.

Neither Mr. DeVries, nor any councillor, linked the abandoned Main Street East site to the report's comments on "orphaned sites." Asked about the site, Mr. DeVries said, "For all intents and purposes, Pigment & Chemical has gone out of business. The Town is going to continue to attempt to see if we can have the buildings on site demolished."

But that won't be easy. Late last June, Mayor Gord Krantz wrote to Environment Minister Bud Wildman about the property, stating, "the Town attaches the greatest priority to the removal and disposal of the transportable chemicals and the demolition of the buildings on the site."

Mr. DeVries said the last of the transportable, hazardous chemicals

were removed from the site Aug. 30.

The property is registered to Pigment & Chemical Inc., which is no longer in operation. The Royal Bank of Canada holds the first mortgage.

According to Mr. Krantz's letter, the site's buildings and soils are contaminated and the bank's position is that it has no responsibility for further property clean-up. "You can't blame them," said Mr. DeVries noting potential liabilities.

"The Town continues to work at communicating with the bank." Those ongoing discussions could determine the site's future, said Mr. DeVries.

In his June letter, Mr. Krantz said

the MOEE district office advised the site's buildings and contents were reasonably secure. However, the Mayor wrote, "It remains a serious concern that someone will manage to gain access to the premises. Therefore the Town considers it to be of critical importance that the hazardous chemicals and the buildings be removed as soon as possible."

In a response that went to council in late August, Mr. Wildman wrote, "I have been advised the buildings are not contaminated and pose no environmental hazard or public health threat to the citizens of Milton. In consideration of the fact the first mortgage is held by the Royal Bank

of Canada, it would not be in the best interest of the Province to assume responsibility for demolishing the buildings."

In mid-August, two boys aged 13 and 14 were charged with break and enter, and arson in the wake of a fire at the site. Police said entry was gained through an insecure door.

Town staff will go to the Province with specific recommendations on the guidelines including; allowance for demolition of buildings on orphaned sites plagued by vandalism, arson or health concerns, and that municipalities be allowed to enter agreements with the MOEE permitting site remediation without future liability.

Art tour in Halton Hills

Art buffs interested in any of a variety of media will likely want to take in the Halton Hills Studio Tour.

The tour runs Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 15-16, from 10 a.m. through 5 p.m., and will see visitors take in the work of nine artists.

The media used include water-colour, acrylics, and forms such as pottery, quilting and precious metal working. The tour is free. For more information, call 877-1312.

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Thursday
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JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION HALTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Registration will begin on October 17, 1994 for the five schools that will implement Junior Kindergarten in January 1995 (Lorne Skuce, Oakwood and W.H. Mofden in Oakville; Joseph Gibbons in Georgetown; W.E. Breckon in Burlington). All parents, even if they have already contacted the school, must formally register at this time.

To make registration easy, please bring verification of your child's date of birth and your child's immunization record.

To be eligible for Junior Kindergarten, children must be four years of age by December 31, 1994 and must RESIDE within the boundaries of the school offering the JK program, and must be a public school supporter.

There may be a few spaces available on a lottery basis for children living outside the school area. Details about the lottery process and the Halton Board's 3-year implementation plan are included in a flyer available through your local school or community information centre.

If you need further information, we are happy to help. Just call your local school or the Education Centre in your area:

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873-0394

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