

Steve Fournier: "People are the foundations of the city"

NIP - people are the key

Federal and provincial government programs designed to improve the quality of deteriorating neighbourhoods and houses are pumping roughly \$800,000 into Penetanguishene this year but the money alone isn't enough to do the job.

The people are the key. That's how Penetanguishene's temporary NIP (Neighbourhood Improvement Program) coordinator Steve Fournier views the situation when it comes to improving a neighbourhood by building a community park, putting in new sidewalks, curbs, sewers, roads or whatever is needed in a particular area of town. (Fournier is a student summer worker at the town office).

"The people are the foundations of the city. Without people you don't have a city or a town." When Fournier talks like that it's not rhetoric. What he says is based on the sincere belief that if "people are given the opportunity to tackle something they can solve their problems."

Through NIP, RRAP (Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program) and OHRP (Ontario Home Renewal Program) the people of Penetanguishene, in particular those in the west end of town - from Centre Street to Park Street including Poyntz and Robert Streets - are being provided with funds to tackle urban problems. A total of \$300,000 is being channelled into the west end of town to upgrade the quality of the neighbourhood. Depending on how many people apply for loans through the program another \$400,000 to \$450,000 could be pumped into the west end of town to upgrade the quality of houses. RRAP provides low interest loans of

up to \$5,000 to improve houses. Repayment of the loans is geared to the need for upgrading the dwelling, and the family's salary with provisions for forgiveness of the loan in some circumstances.

The OHRP offers another \$45,500 which will be channelled to houses outside the west end of town. Under OHRP home owners can receive up to \$7,500 from the province less any federal grants - to improve the quality of their dwelling.

But while the money is there, the people must decide how to spend it and to do that they need to understand what the programs are about.

Explaining the programs to the people is one of Fournier's jobs. "The anacronyms (NIP, RRAP and OHRP) themselves are confusing...if you throw them around. You have to go slow with things when you first talk to people," explains Fournier from this chair in the Chamber of Commerce building which is being used as the town's NIP, RRAP and OHRP information centre.

People are urged to come down to the information centre to find out what NIP, RRAP and OHRP are about. As Fournier puts it, "you've been paying taxes for the past 20 years. Why not take advantage of the programs by seeing if you qualify?"

Once the people have an understanding of the programs the onus is on them to decide how to put available government funds to

that home owners have to apply for the grants to improve their residences. However, for NIP the self help approach means that

residents in the west end of town must come up with a plan on how to most effectively spend \$300,000 to improve the quality of their neighbourhood. "Of NIP," Fournier says, "the residents themselves can accomplish as much as they want depending on how much energy they want to put into it."

The beauty of NIP according to Fournier is that the "program isn't so rigid that novel ideas for solving problems can't be implemented."

The key feature of the NIP program, Fournier believes, is the way it involves people. Physically the problems of neighbourhood blight can be solved by repairing homes and tearing down eyesores. But deteriorated neighbourhoods are more than the physical buildings. They are a symptom of a social illness according to Fournier. Blighted neighbourhoods and rundown buildings, he says, indicate "the person within" has "let go...doesn't give a damn."

Technically, Fournier maintains that urban experts can analyze and suggest cures to rehabilitate neighbourhoods but they don't have the special "every day knowledge" of the people who live within it. "One of the aims of the (NIP) program is to bring these two types of knowledge together."

The planner lacks the common neighbourhood knowledge but has the technical expertise. The person within the neighbourhood lives, works and plays there. He may not have the expertise of a planner but "he knows what he likes and dislikes." Fournier insists.

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Come NIP and RRAP

For mswers to questions on the NIP, RRAP or OHEP phone the NIP RRAP Information Centre at549-2115. Better yet drop by at the centre for a visit. It's located at the Chamber of Commerce building at the corner of Water and Owen Streets. Office hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday.

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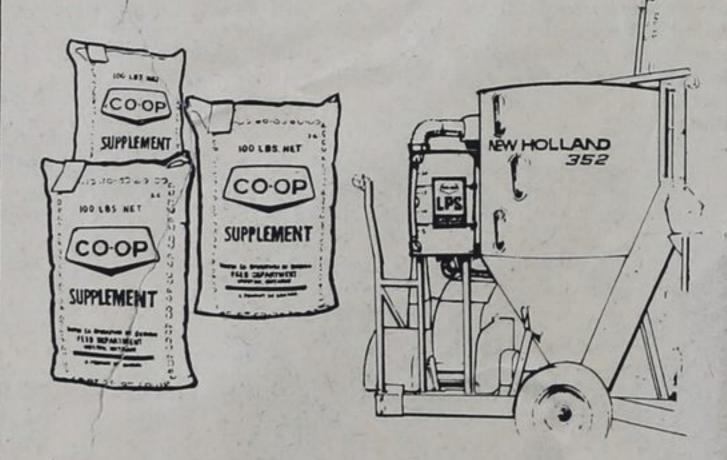
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area Patenaude said.

In the case of RRAP and OHRP that means

acres. When it is taken

into account that three to

five acres of remaining

land are in a gully the

final size of the site for the

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Patenaude estimated.

Tiny still plans on selling part of NWB parkland

troversy between Tiny Township council Township council and authorized the purchase 31.7 acre parcel of land members of the North of the land for \$40,000 on West Basin Parks and the condition that part of Recreation Board over it could be sold if the the size of a proposed recovery of some costs multi-recreation centre in was considered the North West Basin necessary. Now the area remains unresolved council is trying to sell 12 following an appearance acres of the 31.7 acre by a delegation of roughly 12 people at a Tiny located south of a road Township council meeting ast Thursday, concessions and west of

The delegation, led by Camp Marygrove. chairman of the NWB Parks Board, Eugene Friday, Mailloux said a Mailloux, tried to per- petition which calls on suade Tiny council not to Tiny council not to sell 12 sell 12 acres of a 31.7 acre acres until it is proven parcel of land in the NWB that the land will not be which residents hope to needed for any of the develop into a multi- planned facilities, was purpose recreation centre signed by 350 people. over the next 25 years.

parcel of land, which is splitting the 16th and 17th

In an interview last

decision to sell part of the was made some time ago and still stands. She claimed that the

Sibthorpe said that the

NWB didn't need more than 20 acres for its proposed community recreation centre and added that the 20 acre site would be about twice as much as the amount of recreation land in any of the other centres in Tiny Township (Perkinsfield, Lafontaine, Waverley,

Sibthorpe claimed that the plans were "ambitious" and indicated that while a large 31.7 acre multi-recreational complex as planned by Deputy-reeve Hilda the NWB would be nice,

the proposal may not be chase the land township amount of land to 20 practical when aspects spokesmen claimed they like maintenance costs are considered.

goal of establishing a keep the whole 31.7 acres multi-purpose township recreation centre she said. "But we know we can't accomplish that for years." If a township recreation centre is not practical something may have to be worked out on an area basis involving other municipalities Sibthorpe said.

NWB Parks and Recreation president, Larry Patenaude, in a telephone interview Monday said, "We think we're being treated unfairly on the deal." When Tiny did pur-

half acres of the bush land Tiny has a long range if they couldn't afford to Patenaude claimed. Now an additional five acres of bush land have been added for the proposed sale. That reduces the

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would sell only six and a

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No more bananas for Tiny Township monkey

finding the corn to be not so sweet, has apparently changed its diet to tastes. cucumbers, tomatoes, and beans.

Tiny Township's chief vagrant, Point that the infamous escapee of the Wasaga Beach Zoo has diversified his

Mrs. Charlebois' neighbour, Mrs. Officials of the Midland detachment Seguin reported the monkey sighting to of the Ontario Provincial Police the OPP office at noon on Friday, and discovered evidence on Friday in the told police that he had ambled off in a garden of Mrs. Charlebois of Cedar westerly direction.

Wessenger names NDP committee members

Simcoe Centre NDP Candidate Paul Wessenger today named the members of his campaign committee.

Campaign chairman is Rich Partridge and chief financial officer Phil Lade. Other members of the committee include finance chairman Michael Wolfe, organizer Myra Partridge, office manager Forrest Sandberg, sign chairman Jim Rosso, publicity chairman Katie Austin, Barrie area chairman Fred Ruemper and Bradford area chairman Dwight Jones.

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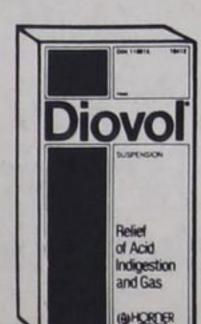
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