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Lembo, Garrison deny report of sale talks

by Dave Wilson and Terri Howell

Tom Lembo, president of Lemaire Air Services, and Keith Rich, a co-owner of Garrison Aviation, have denied reports that the two companies have met to negotiate a sale of Lemaire to Garrison.

In the January 20 issue of the Midland Free Press newspaper, it was reported that representatives of the two companies had been meeting to discuss the sale of Lemaire, and that Mr. Rich had stated that an agreement of sale in the near future was a distinct possibility.

The Times contacted Mr. Lembo and Mr. Rich Monday morning, and both men agreed that the two companies had met on one occasion but the purpose of the meeting was to effect a resolution of the differences between the two companies concerning the operation of Huronia Airport.

Both men stated that the topic of a possible sale of Lemaire to Garrison did not arise. Mr. Lembo said that he, Mr. Rich and other Garrison co-owner Peter Crampton had a luncheon meeting on December 26, and discussed the situation at Huronia Airport—a situation which has in the past been a source of considerable friction between the two flying companies.

"Everyone knows that there has been conflict between our two companies, and the purpose of the Boxing Day meeting was to sit down and discuss our differences like rational people," Mr. Lembo said.

"We did not enter into negotiations concerning any sale," he added.

Lembo said that Peter Crampton telephoned him Saturday concerning the newspaper article.

"Peter phoned me and said he was appalled to see the article," Mr. Lembo explained.

He went on to explain that when contacted last Thursday by Free Press reporters concerning the sale rumours, he told them he had no comment.

"I said I had no comment because there was nothing to talk about," Mr. Lembo said, adding that he "did not imagine that Lemaire's ownership would change."

Contacted in Toronto, Garrison's Mr. Rich confirmed Lembo's explanation.

"This whole thing has been blown out of proportion," he said. "I can't believe what's going on up there."

He agreed that representatives of the two companies had met once on Boxing Day, but that "the meeting was strictly exploratory."

Rich said that the meeting was "constructive", and that a good working relationship between Garrison and Lemaire was necessary for the successful operation of Huronia Airport.

He said that Mr. Crampton had contacted him by telephone over the weekend. Mr. Rich said that "Peter was about as shocked as Tom and I were" with the newspaper report.

He noted that it was "difficult to imagine" negotiations for the sale of Lemaire to Garrison, since the lawsuit served against Garrison by Lemaire "is proceeding right ahead."

Mr. Rich said he would not comment any further on the newspaper article, claiming that "Tom (Lembo) is really the one to talk to. His story is the same as mine."

Mr. Lembo too referred to the much publicized lawsuit, issued against Garrison, Crampton, and the Huronia Airport Commission early last May for an alleged breach of contract for the operation of Huronia Airport. Lembo said that he and his lawyers are planning on proceeding with litigations, and that a date for a discovery hearing has been set for February 25.

He emphasized that he has no intentions at present of selling Lemaire by noting that he is at the moment planning for the spring operations of the air service. He said also, that of late, co-operation between Lemaire and Garrison at Huronia Airport "had been very good."

Snowmobiler hospitalized after crash

A Midland man was rushed to Toronto General Hospital Monday night following a snowmobile-car accident in Waubesaushene.

Midland OPP say that David Roy Langman, 25, of Hanna Street in Midland sustained major injuries when a snow vehicle he was driving came in collision with a parked car.

The accident occurred at 9:20 p.m. on the Old Coldwater Road.

Police say that Langman was taken by ambulance to Huronia District Hospital, and later transferred to Toronto General.

OPP are investigating the accident.

Firefighters lose battle for Sandy Bay Hotel

Three fire crews unable to halt spreading flames

by Chris Knowles

It took just over two hours for flames to completely lay waste to the Sandy Bay Hotel Monday night.

Firemen from Penetanguishene, Midland and Tay Township appeared to have the blaze under control shortly after they arrived on the scene, however hampered by gusts of wind and a lack of water, crews were unable to halt the flames from spreading.

No one was injured in the blaze.

Owner William Frampton and his wife are on a cruise in the Carribean. They left their son to manage the hotel in their absence and he, two guests and two employees, scrambled to safety.

Midland Deputy Fire Chief Jim Lemieux estimated the damage at \$250,000. The Fire Marshall from Bracebridge was called in yesterday to help determine the cause of the fire. Unconfirmed reports indicate it initiated in the basement of the hotel, the result of a short in the electrical system.

Fire crews confronted the blaze shortly after 5:00 p.m. At that point no flames could be seen from the exterior of the building and only a minor amount of smoke was visible. However within 20 minutes the west windows were buckling under the heat and once the glass shattered and oxygen was introduced into the building, the serious nature of the fire was evident as smoke billowed from all sides.

Although crews appeared to have subdued the flames at one point, firemen were heard to say "there's no hope". Within the hour it was obvious they were correct.

As many as six fire trucks were at the scene during the height of the blaze, but many were shuttling back and forth to retrieve water. An attempt to pump water from the bay 300 feet away proved fruitless as the pumps weren't powerful enough.

The blaze was fueled by liquor stored in the hotel's dining lounge and the varnished cedar construction of the building also promoted the rapid advancement of flames. A large propane tank, located a few yards east of the building was kept under observation by fireman as were houses that were being showered by a hail of burning cinders. No damage was incurred by the surrounding buildings.

The Fire Marshall's report was not available at press time.



'There's no hope'

Firemen realized there was little they could do, except preventing the blaze from spreading to neighbouring houses, less than an hour after they arrived at the Sandy Bay Hotel. Only the stone foundation of the structure was left standing shortly after 7:00 p.m. Monday. Fire crews arrived at the Hotel two hours earlier. The Fire Marshall's Office is investigating the blaze.

Staff photos by Chris Knowles

Task force approved by council

Main St. revitalization still alive

The possibility of revitalizing downtown Penetanguishene is far from dead, according to Mayor Vince Moreau and Penetanguishene council. Despite the fact that Council officially recognized the petition to defeat the original downtown improvement plan, Mayor Moreau maintains that the problem of downtown revitalization is

Grew staff back to work

The 36 workers laid off by Grew Boat Co. in December have all been rehired, according to vice-president Peter Francis. Modifications to the plant have not yet been completed, Mr. Francis said, but the workers were hired back on January 9, after a three week lay-off.

The purpose of the shutdown was to convert the plant to enable the manufacture of Chris Craft boats, and the modifications are proceeding well, though slightly behind schedule.

"Right now we're widening doors for larger hulls and they'll be raising lights near the end of the week," Mr. Francis explained.

At the same time as it laid off the workers, the company announced that it would be hiring another 50 workers when the plant reopened.

According to the vice-president, no extra hiring has been done as yet, but it will begin in about two weeks if everything goes according to schedule.

The extra hiring will be done locally, according to Mr. Francis.

When it does take place, the new hiring will be done gradually, and will increase with the production of the plant.

According to Mr. Francis, there won't be any problem filling the extra positions.

"We already have about 150 applications for the new jobs," he said.

one that must be studied carefully and acted upon quickly.

At Monday's council meeting the Mayor introduced a proposal to form a task force to study the problem, and council approved that motion unanimously.

During the discussion before the Mayor introduced the motion, he questioned council on the problems of the first downtown revitalization program.

Councillor Hubert Charlebois spoke for a number of Main Street merchants and said that the assessment of the various merchants wasn't carried out properly.

"There wasn't enough discussion on the whole matter," Mr. Charlebois said. "I tried to discuss the matter with the Chamber of Commerce, but I didn't have much success."

In summarizing the first downtown revitalization study, Mayor Moreau said that he was disappointed with many of the things that transpired.

"I was disappointed that the plan didn't succeed, and disappointed at some of the comments that were made," the Mayor said.

Councillor Lionel Dion stated that he too was concerned about the problem of Main Street's future.

"This council has been accused in the past, of ignoring downtown. The main street will continue to go down if something isn't done immediately," Mr. Dion said.

The purpose of the task force suggested in the Mayor's proposal, and approved by Council, will be to study the problem of downtown revitalization, with regards to the Ontario Downtown Revitalization Program.

The task force will be composed of four people, and will come under the jurisdiction of the Housing Development Committee.

"The members of the task force must be people who are interested in the entire downtown area," the Mayor said.

The task force will study all aspects of downtown renewal, and they will report back to Council. Areas such as the necessity of a

market study, methods of public participation, and partnership between public and private enterprise will be closely examined by the task force.

Councillor Frances St. Amant suggested that the task force should hold regular public meetings, inviting the public to give input into the project.

Councillor Ronald Bellisle expressed concern over the possibility of extra tax dollars being levied on the public for the project.

"If there are going to be extra tax dollars involved—how can you justify going to the taxpayer to improve the business area, when the people who own businesses in the area have already said they aren't interested?" Mr. Bellisle asked the Mayor.

Clerk Yvon Gagne explained that in some cases the province will pay up to two-thirds of the cost of a downtown improvement plan,

and that the rest of the money would have to come from taxes.

Mayor Moreau explained however, that he is not asking the tax payers for anything at this time.

Another area that the task force will study, is the possibility of working along with the development on Highway 27.

The task force will be composed entirely of lay persons, and Council will not become involved except in an advisory sense. Chairman of the task force will be selected first, then the Mayor and the Chairman will appoint the other three members.

The proposal also states that all Department Heads and town Consultants will be available to the task force for consultation regarding the revitalization program.

The task force will report back to Council, with the downtown study, within four months.

Council notes

Iron-man streak ends

Penetanguishene Mayor Vince Moreau will miss his first council meeting in 12 years when he takes a vacation in February. While the Mayor is away, Reeve Art Stewart will take over the reigns at town hall. The Citizen wishes the Mayor Bon Voyage on his well deserved vacation.

Highway 24 study underway

Penetanguishene Council recently agreed to enter into an agreement with the Tiny-Tay Peninsula Planning Board and Ainly and Associates Ltd., to launch the long awaited Highway 27 study.

Council agreed to pay 15 per cent of the costs incurred by the TTPPB, up to a maximum of \$2,220.

Presentation of study results is scheduled to take place in September, and a final report will be ready by October.

Planning Board members resigns

Penetanguishene Council accepted the resignation of G.J. Robillard as a member of the Planning Board at the Monday night meeting of the Council. Replacing Mr. Robillard is Jon Deschiffart, a teacher at Penetanguishene Secondary School.

Council members voiced their disappointment at the news of Mr. Robillard's resignation in view of his great contribution to council's works in the past.

In fact, Councillor Ray Baker asked the Council if they would consider not accepting Mr. Robillard's resignation.



Howard Elliott and Dona Beauvais

New faces at Citizen

The Citizen is pleased to announce the arrival of two new staff members, and would like to take this time to introduce the newcomers.

Dona Beauvais, a resident of the Penetanguishene area has taken over the duties of receptionist-reporter in the Citizen office. Dona graduated from centennial College in Scarborough with training in both journalism and radio and television arts.

Her work experience includes a term at an advertising agency in Toronto.

She has lived in this area for the past four years, and is already quite familiar with the people and places in Penetanguishene and

area. Taking over for past editor Chris Knowles is Howard Elliott, from Hamilton. Howard is a graduate of Conestoga College in Kitchener, where he studied journalism for three years. He gained experience during his education by working for various weekly newspapers in the Kitchener area.

Chris Knowles will be heading to school for a course in photographic arts, following a tour of western Canada and south of the border.

The new editor would like to invite everyone and anyone from the area to come into the Citizen office with suggestions, complaints or simply to say hello.