

Residents view leisure masterplan again

Community groups affected by the new Leisure Master Plan had a chance to talk over some of the recommendations Thursday night.

Unfortunately, due to the snowstorm, the town's consultant, Jim Morgenstern didn't make it. But members of the Arena, Parks and Recreation board, the Library board and the Museum board discussed some of the implications of the plan. They also talked about the accuracy of cost figures.

In that meeting, the most obvious need that arose was for the museum, which according to the report would get nothing for building repairs and upgrading.

The draft report doesn't ignore the museum, but it reiterates facts already well known, such as the need for heat, various structural improvements and moves to protect the collection. However, the consultant does not prescribe funds; instead the report says the board should identify the most immediate improvements needed to preserve the building and seek cooperative funding from the town.

At Thursday's meeting, Bob Klug, representing the Museum Board, said the museum needs to reshingle the roof, add canopies and do some landscaping to make the building more acceptable as a heritage site for tourists and locals. He thought \$20,000 this year would be enough and, with the encouragement of Ron Marchildon, is recommending the consultants consider this need.

The master plan's draft recognized the previous struggle the museum had to preserve its building. A report, written by the Ontario Museum Consultants and Peter Hamilton, recommended improvements approaching \$300,000. The report also said the improvements made last summer are insufficient to ensure the building's serviceability.

The other groups at Thursday's meeting were willing to support the Museum Board's request, as Marchildon encouraged them to work together.

The report allocated \$125,000 to the library to relocate, since the current building on Simcoe Street is already so cramped. The consultants labelled this as a high priority, needing attention within the next year.

"The need for expanded and improved library facilities," it reads, "has been demonstrated by a number of previous studies undertaken by the Library Board and was reinforced by the Master Plan studies. Furthermore, other major facility requirements and capital expenditures have not been identified in the Master Plan. The library relocation, therefore, should be seen as a high priority amongst future leisure projects."

The current library was constructed in 1909 and, according to the Master Plan, "suffers from a number of design and physical limitations that

seriously restrict the level of service available." Included in this list are a lack of parking, the virtual inaccessibility by the handicapped and elderly presented by the long flight of stairs, limited interior space for studying, programming and reading.

One option available to the Library and Museum boards would be to push for the proposed multipurpose facility on the waterfront. Along with the library and museum, the multipurpose leisure facility would house a theatre, convention centre and meeting rooms. The building is the brainchild of the North Simcoe Arts Council, which has already presented its idea to Penetanguishene's town Council.

The Master Plan supports this idea, since it

would eliminate duplication of costs for meeting rooms and enhance joint programming. The consultants add the quality of facilities available to all agencies would be improved and the new central focus for leisure programs would increase interest, awareness and participation.

As for sports facilities, the only major facility deficiency pointed out by the Leisure Master Plan is an indoor swimming pool. The plan says the public demand for an indoor pool and the recreational opportunities it would present exceeds the demand for all other facilities.

A new indoor pool would cost at least \$2,166,000 the plan says. This cost does not include land costs; however, the

consultants say a pool could be put up on an existing park. The con-

sultants also warn pools often operate at deficits. Penetanguishene's pool

deficit, the consultants predict, would be around \$90,000 a year.



Silver threads

Among the representatives of local service groups with a table at Mountainview Mall on the weekend were Edna Surridge, left, and May Moriarity, of Silver Threads, who shared a table with the

Telecare group. Silver Threads is a telephone reassurance program for shut-ins and senior citizens living in their own homes.

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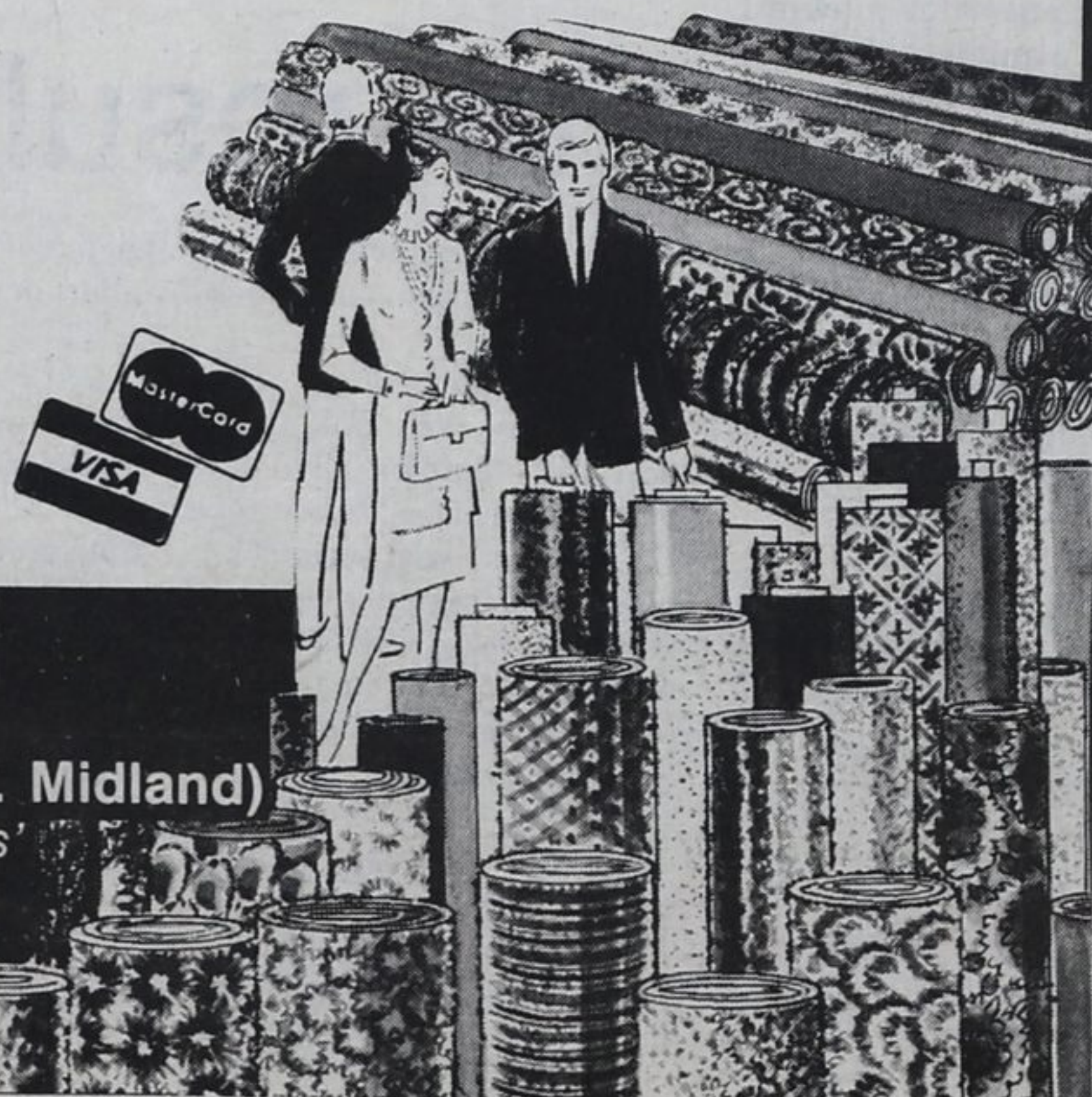


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