

Councillor Bell Hears Complaints

Will Form Ward 5 Citizens' Group

A citizens' group for Ward 5 of the new Town of Richmond Hill will be organized in the near future to serve as a voice for that area. This was the decision of a meeting called November 3 at St. John's Anglican Church by Stewart Bell, councillor-elect for that ward which becomes a part of Richmond Hill under regional government January 1. The ward reaches from the Gamble Sideroad to the CFRB Sideroad and from Bathurst Street to the proposed Highway 404. It will contain portions of the present Townships of King, Whitchurch, Vaughan and Markham. About 50 people from all sections of the ward attended.

First steps toward a citizens' association have already been taken reported Robert McElhinney and Mrs. Diane Foster of Oak Ridges. Alarmed about the safety of children and pedestrians during the reconstruction of Yonge Street through their community, a meeting was called to which about a dozen groups from Oak Ridges and Lake Wilcox sent representatives. This meeting decided to ask the York County Board of Education to extend the school bus service and were successful. They also invited a representative of the Department of Highways to attend a subsequent meeting and explain what was happening on Yonge Street. This too, was done.

Members of this committee then realized that concerted action could solve many problems plaguing the area, but is limited because there is no overall association to spearhead such appeals, it was reported.



STEWART BELL
Ward 5 Councillor

The hope was expressed that the organizational meeting can be held within two to three weeks. It will be publicized in the press and by telephone calls by those present at Tuesday's meeting who live in different areas of the ward.

Mr. Bell reported that Richmond Hill has set up an organizational committee composed of members of the 1970 council and members-elect of the 1971-72 council. This committee is hard at work to ease the transition to regional government.

The councillor-elect reported that Richmond Hill Works Department is waiting for a new high speed snowplow and is stockpiling sand and salt for the winter. They are trying to give us assurance that we will get as good snowplowing (if not better) than we are now getting.

"For fire protection we will be dealing directly with Richmond Hill," he told the people present.

"Monday night tentative committees for the 1971-72 council were drawn up," he said, as he pointed out that these would have to be ratified by the new council. "I will be serving as chairman of the personnel, procedure and bylaws committee; on the parks and recreation committee (one of the things I was most interested in); and the works and property committee, which deals with roads, and snow removal, etc. I will also be the council representative on the civic improvement committee. Through these channels I will put forth your needs and hopes."

Sid Goldsmith of the Gormley Sideroad wanted to know about garbage removal. "Most of us do it privately and pay some months in advance and would like to know as soon as possible what plans are underway."

BELL RATES
Mr. Goldsmith also wanted to know if "we people at the north end of the new town will be able to telephone into the city without toll charge, when we become a part of Richmond Hill." Mr. Bell pointed out that this is a decision which will have to be made by Bell Canada. "Telephone service has always been a problem because of our closeness to Aurora — as long as I've been around here — and that's a long time. One person will have an Oak Ridges number and his next door neighbor an Aurora number," pointed out a woman.

Mr. Goldsmith, Robert Cornes and George Holland, all of the Gormley-Stouffville Road, sought advice on how to deal with the burden of taxation resulting from reassessment. They reported their appeals made in 1969 had not yet been heard, that Whitchurch Township Council refuses to implement Bill 143, (an amendment to the Municipal Act which provides a \$50 limitation to increases of

taxes from reassessment) and that they were refused comparative figures, on which to base their appeals, by the assessment department. "What do we do now?" They asked Mr. Bell and Regional Councillor-Elect Gordon Rowe, who came to the meeting after a speaking engagement in Oak Ridges.

They also reported they had been in touch with William Hodgson M.L.A. York North, who had promised to consult Minister of Municipal Affairs Darcy McKeough on what could be done by these ratepayers to force Whitchurch to implement Bill 143.

"If the assessment remains the same and at Richmond Hill's present mill rate, our taxes will go up two and a half times," renorted Mr. Goldsmith, who pointed out great discrepancies in the market value placed on neighboring properties. "Next year Richmond Hill can have my house, if I have to pay these high taxes," he stated. A list of the area's needs was prepared but no priorities were set to give the new association a chance to add other suggestions to the list.

Making assessment information available to ratepayers headed the list. Other items were extending water into the Lake Wilcox area; providing sewage disposal, street lights, gas; provision of crosswalks on Yonge Street for the protection of pedestrians (children and adults); and numbering of houses in Whitchurch Township for fire protection purposes. One member of the audience commented, "Now when the fire truck arrives on the street it is a question of 'Which house has the fire!'"

SIDEWALKS
Sidewalks along Yonge Street are also needed, it was pointed out, although a five-foot asphalt surface is being laid next to the curb which can serve as a walkway. Dave Smith, head of a ratepayers' group in Oak Ridges reported that both King and Whitchurch Townships had turned down a proposal to install a sidewalk during reconstruction of Yonge Street, because of the high cost involved. He reported that investigation is being carried out on the practicability and cost of an asphalt sidewalk.

Mr. Smith also reported that some years ago the houses in Oak Ridges had been numbered, resulting in some confusion. His group had hired an Ontario Land Surveyor who had had the

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Catherine Ann Woodley, who lives with her parents in Burlington, Ontario, is only three years old, but already she has won a bout with cancer. At the age of nine months she developed Wilms' tumor, which is a cancer of the kidney. Doctors removed the kidney and then treated the area with radiation to kill off any lingering cells. Now Cathy is well again and full of life, thanks to research which has resulted in improved treatment techniques.

Little Cathy Woodley is young to be teaching anything to adults. But she knows that—Cancer can be beaten

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Private or unopened roads, garbage, blocking of the creek which drains Lake Wilcox, unauthorized filling in of inlets from the lake, use of schools by community groups were also discussed.

Mr. Goldsmith suggested that the foreman on the highway construction job be contacted directly to deal with the interference with the flow of water in the creek.

"Will there be any change in taxes?" asked one member of council, and another stated, "If we do not have the services provided to the present residents of Richmond Hill, I think we should have a preferred tax rate."

FIGHT FOR LOW TAXES
Mr. Bell replied that "I am going to fight to keep taxes as low as possible." He pointed out that the area of Whitchurch to become part of Richmond Hill "contains one-fifth the assessment of the present township, and therefore carried one-fifth of the burden of the township and wasn't getting one-fifth of the services. We are going into a municipality which won't need that help and I think we can expect that the money raised in this area will be spent in this area."

Mr. Rowe pointed out that in King Township 61c of every dollar raised in municipal taxes went into schools. "That leaves only 39c for roads, police, fire-fighting, administrative expense, and the myriad other costs, facing a municipality. I would hesitate to make any commitment at this time. Regional government is a whole new thing, we are just getting to grips with it and it is a monumental task."

stated Mr. Bell.

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