

Groups seeking recreation grants feel the pinch

By FRED SIMPSON
Liberal Sports Editor

Furrowed brows were the order of the night last week as Richmond Hill Parks and Recreation Committee members worried over 1979 grant

requests from various local organizations. Adding his furrowed brow and playing 'Mother Hen' to the occasion was spectator Councillor John Birchall. Birchall is chairman of council's finance com-

mittee which will be making the final decision on approval of the total grant figures. His not unexpected theme centred on fiscal belt-tightening on all fronts as he pointed out that "finance com-

mittee's present budget increase is 20 per cent and we want to cut it down to five per cent if we can do it." He noted that the parks and recreation committee's increase was "something like 15 to 20

per cent right now and that's a bit disturbing. It's obvious we can't live with that amount so there will be major cuts, in the grant situation particularly." Birchall added it was "finance committee's feeling it can't subsidize organizations operating with surplus funds. We'll provide per capita grants if the need is shown and if it doesn't go against the policy of such grants."

Coming in for the major slash was a \$3,000 request from the debt-ridden Bond Lake Figure Skating Club. The club, already \$5,000 in debt, had budgeted for another \$3,000 deficit in 1979 and wanted a \$3,000 grant to cover it. They found a sole supporter in Ward 2 councillor Al Duffy who felt the special circumstances of the club and the "important contribution they make to the Oak Ridges area" should be considered. The skating club already receives an ice-time subsidy (amounting

to \$984.75) and it would fly in the face of the committee's policy which doesn't provide for both a general grant and the ice-time subsidy. It's Duffy's contention that the committee should study each case on its individual merits. Committee Chairman Mike Burnie said that "such a grant would go against our present policy. Maybe we should get together and re-study our policies for the future."

Softball League which saw its grant lopped from \$1,000 to \$750. Committee members played verbal volleyball with a \$1,000 request from the recently-formed Richmond Hill Sports Council. In a series of defeated votes the figure went from \$1,000 to \$500 before finally coming to rest at \$750. Untouched was a \$4,000 grant request from the York Region Family Y and an additional \$3,600. The latter figure represents services rendered by the Family Y for the Parks and

Recreation Department. Also receiving approval was \$720 for Richvale Minor Ball; \$100 for Richmond Hill Lawn Bowling (for an annual trophy); Richmond Hill Minor Ball, \$1,650 (requested figure was \$3,675); and Richmond Hill Minor Soccer, \$1,965. Ice time subsidies were provided for the Oak Ridges & District Minor Hockey amounting to \$2,087.91; Bond Lake Figure Skating Club, \$984.75; Richmond Hill Hockey Association, \$5,674; and Richmond Hill Figure Skating Club, \$2,536.60.

Observatory district may be park

The Richmond Hill Parks and Recreation Committee has recommended to council that it lease 12 acres just south of David Dunlap Observatory and turn it into a passive park area. The lease for the land, fronting 16th Avenue, will be for 15 years. It's presently owned by the University of Toronto and will be called the "David Dunlap Observatory Park".

A report to the parks and recreation committee last week termed the area "essential to meet future needs of The Town in accordance with our long range requirements". Negotiation with the University of Toronto for the land has been underway for some time. The 15-year lease leaves the university with the right to terminate it after seven years.

A design concept for the site would be prepared by The Town and approved by the university "to ensure the uses of the site will be of a passive nature with no organized sports

activities allowed". The lease also required the Town to fence the northern boundary of the site to prevent park users entering the Observatory grounds. No lighting will be installed without written consent of the owners and "such lighting as may be installed shall be for safety or protection purposes". The Town will be given first right of refusal for a

period of 90 days if the university receives an offer to purchase the land. All improvements made by the Town will become the property of the university at the end of the 15-year lease.

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Rezoning mystery

After meeting with York Separate School trustees, a Thornhill firm still can't figure out why the board is objecting to the rezoning of a neighboring piece of property, which would permit light industry on John Street. The board owns land on John Street which it has designated as a possible future school site. The adjacent property, having a frontage onto John of 150 feet, had been zoned by the Town of Markham as R.R. 1 or for residential use. Canac Kitchens Limited has applied to the planning department to have the land re-zoned.

"The only use that is reasonable for the site is light industrial," said Gordon Pietch, of the law firm of Gardiner, Roberts representing Canac. "That would involve warehousing, retailing in conjunction with warehousing and light manufacturing."

Mr. Pietch said there would be no industry producing obnoxious (SIC) fumes or high noise levels and claimed any manufacturing would only be for light products or the assembly of manufactured products. Management committee chairman Jack McDermott said the board's only objection is it felt the land in question would act as a buffer between a school and other industrial land in the community.

Director of Education John Zupanic later indicated the board would definitely be needing a school in that part of Thornhill within the next three or four years. He said there is always a possibility of changing sites by buying, selling or even trading back and forth with the public board.

Two schools in Thornhill, St. Luke's and St. Michael's are already suffering from serious space problems. "We would be prepared to offer for your approval a site plan complete with appropriate fencing, berming and whatever else might be necessary to meet the board's requirements," said Mr. Pietch. If you are agreeable to the proposal, we would ask you to remove your objection. May I ask what alternative use of our land the board thinks might be suitable?"

"We hadn't considered it that far. Our prime concern was that the land not be zoned industrial," said Mr. McDermott. Mr. Pietch didn't threaten legal action over the matter but claimed there are legal implications which his company wished to discuss with the board's solicitor.

The committee decided to discuss the offer and further consider its objection to the change in zoning bylaws for the property.

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