

New Richmond Hill education group is slowly forming

Slowly but surely, the nucleus of a new Richmond Hill education group is jelling, as witnessed by about a dozen concerned citizens at the first organizational meeting last Wednesday night.

The idea for such a group was first suggested by Bruce Langstaff at the final meeting of the Richmond Hill Study Committee last November. At that time, he was spokesman for the McConaghy Association.

"Attending last week's meeting, one might not feel much was accomplished. For what had to be done, I think we made good progress and showed there is a definite need for the type of group we have in mind," said Mr. Langstaff.

Besides establishing that there is a need and purpose for such a group (no formal name yet exists) Mr. Langstaff claims those involved are all willing to commit themselves to the time needed and the necessary level of support required to make such a proposition function well.

"We were also able to define the next step," he said, "which is four of us sitting down to prepare some options or recommendations for the whole group at its February 7 meeting."

All except two of Richmond Hill's primary schools were represented at the first meeting. The Oak Ridges schools were

not asked to participate and Mr. Langstaff said he made a point of calling only those people who expressed an interest in sitting on the group after the committee disbanded.

"You have to remember that the board didn't consider anything north of the Stouffville Road when it started looking at changes in school boundaries and possible school closings," said Mr. Langstaff.

The major question yet to be resolved is who should be represented by such an interest group. Mr. Langstaff said the smaller committee will closely consider whether the town should have a voice in the group's policies and which parts of the community other than parents with children in the system would be asked to take part.

"We want to make clear we're not a self-appointed elite and that there is a need for a properly constituted organization. I'm not prepared to be a mouth-piece or a report-writer for a bunch of people who might show up at a meeting once or twice a month," he said.

Richmond Hill Trustee Bev Breslow said trustees were alienated from the group from the first sentence of the agenda. She admits there is a need for some kind of Richmond Hill body that represents both the elementary and secondary school parents, though.

"I don't think I'll be restricted from coming to their meetings," said Mrs. Breslow. "I guess I'll keep coming until they decide to throw me out."

Mr. Langstaff said, once off the ground, the group must establish credibility with the board, the press and other interested parties. He claims its ultimate position will be one between the board and individual schools, acting as a sifter and purveyor of information both ways.

"People shouldn't be put in the position of having to protect a piece of real estate. Richmond Hill is the piece of real estate we should be fighting for," he said.

The body, he said, will not act as a complaint bureau for parents. He wants to avoid duplicating what individual schools can and should be doing.



New OMEA exec

Lou Wainwright of Richmond Hill Hydro, seated, left, is second vice president of District 4 of the Ontario Municipal Electric Association. Other members of the group are R. Cavanagh, Scarborough, president, seated centre; and Don McNab, Markham Hydro, 1st vice president. Standing are G.C. Huffman, Etobicoke Hydro; J. Yarrow, Brampton Hydro; J. Rankin, Oakville PUC; A. Fleischaker, Newmarket Hydro; C. Thomson, Milton Hydro; and R. Morris, Toronto Hydro. The elections took place at the OMEA annual meeting recently. (Ontario Hydro photo)

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