

Townships urge link to 417

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Back to school: Phooey!



The weight of the world seemed to be resting on Tracy Robert's small shoulders as she faced her first day in kindergarten at Russell Public School. Cheer up Tracy, it's not all that bad! (Photo by Rowsell)

Wine and dine? —

Metcalfe residents oppose "Watering Hole"

If businessman Robert Lalonde has decided what he's going to do with a piece of prime real estate he owns on Metcalfe's Victoria Street, he has yet to reveal his intentions to Osgoode Township council.

Council has not heard from Mr. Lalonde since early in August when his application to the Liquor Licensing Board of Ontario for a license for his property was rejected until a building is approved.

The Lalonde application was opposed by council represented by Reeve Albert Bouwers and members Mary Cooper and Albert McKeown as well as a group of residents who don't like the idea of a hotel in the village.

While Mr. Lalonde could not be reached for confirmation, Reeve Bouwers told the Castor Review he understands the entrepreneur has modified his plans due to public opposition and is now thinking of a licensed steak-house and discotheque. However, no plans have been submitted to council or township planning board.

Mr. Lalonde's property, commonly called the Brick Block, once contained four businesses. However, the building fell into

such a state of disrepair, it was finally condemned and ordered demolished by council. Cost of wrecking the old structure and cleaning up the site will be added to the owner's tax bill.

Contrary to widespread belief, a licensed establishment would be permissible in Metcalfe under township bylaws.

"Council certainly wouldn't be opposed to a good licensed restaurant," Reeve Bouwers emphasized. "We would be only too happy to have something like that."

Terry Levia, a teacher at Osgoode Township High School who opposes a hotel in the village, would also welcome a quality restaurant.

"But I don't think a tavern within walking distance of a high school is a good idea," Mr. Levia insisted.

A Metcalfe resident since the beginning of the year, Mr. Levia maintained a low-quality watering hole would destroy the serenity of the village.

"One of the reasons I moved out here is because it's quiet and serene and I wouldn't want the esthetic quality lost. If anybody wants a watering hole, Russell and other places are only minutes away."

Mr. Levia said he would like to see Metcalfe made more appealing to people thinking of the village as a home.

"If there's a tavern in the centre of the village, they're going to think twice before moving here."

He said he was also concerned with the safety of village residents.

"I'm not saying everybody coming out of a tavern would bomb around and kill all the residents, but why have something potentially dangerous when problems can be avoided."

The teacher concluded simply that a hotel would be "more negative than positive."

Another OTHS teacher, Bob Greenfield, who attended the Liquor Licensing Board hearing, would also be receptive to a restaurant on the Brick Block. He too is staunchly opposed to a tavern.

Such places are often "hang-outs for unsavory types" who get involved in "illicit activities", Mr. Greenfield said.

"When Mr. Lalonde goes before the planning board, we'll be there", he pledged.

Four municipal neighbors have joined forces to try to squeeze close to \$2 million out of the provincial government for development of a new link to Highway 417.

The township of Osgoode, Russell, Cumberland, and Winchester have combined to prepare a comprehensive brief designed to convince the province that reconstruction and paving 11.4 miles of the Boundary Road from Marionville to 417 is viable and necessary.

It is not yet known if the Ministry of Transportation and Communications will agree to finance the project.

Plans call for the project to be staggered over four years with the first phase beginning next year.

Osgoode Township Reeve Albert Bouwers is optimistic the Ministry will see the value of the improved road. He's delighted with the cooperation Osgoode received from neighboring municipalities in preparing the brief.

The Boundary Road begins in Marionville and separates Os-

goode and Winchester. The road continues northerly as the boundary between Osgoode and Russell for approximately 10.2 miles at which point it intersects Regional Road 8. The road runs another 1.8 miles to intersect 417 at a major exchange.

Part of the estimated cost of the project includes \$216,000 for reconstruction of two deficient bridges.

The brief recommends staging the project with the realization the province is experiencing fiscal problems and it would be impractical to undertake all of the work at once.

The brief also notes the cost of the proposed improvement can't be borne under normal subsidy arrangements without "imposing an unrealistic tax burden on the local municipalities."

It's estimated the new road would have an initial traffic flow of about 400 vehicles a day, increasing by about five per cent annually. The current flow ranges from about 50 vehicles to 350 on

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Sidewalk Talk

By Mark Van Dusen

Winter Schmecknology

Here it is, 1978 - Man is on the moon, heart surgery is common - yet scientists can't give us a long range weather forecast.

"We don't have the technology to predict weather more than five days ahead," the scientists say, throwing up their hands.

One can only wonder if they have the know-how even for that, judging from the accuracy of even their day-ahead projections.

The radio says rain, it shines; cold, its hot. So how does one get some idea of what kind of winter to expect?

Technology, schmecknology. Our forefathers along the Castor River judged the weather for the coming winter by the seat of their pants.

Anticipating the winter weather was more important in the old days. The prospect of a colder-than-average winter with heavy snow meant storing extra firewood, livestock feed and food provisions. There were no big powerful snowplows to rely on.

The Canadian Farm and Home Almanac, which is still a fixture on many rural kitchen shelves, was often turned to for help in forecasting winter weather.

Peter Geiger, whose family firm in Lewiston, Me., publishes the almanac, says that Castor Region residents can expect a hard, tough winter with an above-average snowfall. The almanac gets its predictions from a "secret astronomer's" formula which dates back to 1818 and is 80-85 per cent accurate Geiger says.

But our ancestors didn't have to reach for the almanac to get a line on the winter weather. They had their own ways of telling, ways which were probably no less scientific than the almanac's and no less accurate.

Nature was their guideline. They expected a bad winter if squirrels tails grew bushier, fur and hair on livestock and pets was thicker, if cows hooves broke off earlier, if crows gathered together, if birds huddled on the ground, if the birds ate up all the berries early.

A real howler was coming if hornets and yellow jackets built their nests heavier and closer to the ground than usual, if there were a lot of spiders in the fall, if crickets roosted in the chimney, if ants built their hills higher, if the black band on a woolly bear caterpillar was wider than usual.

Not to mention vegetables. A bad winter could be expected if carrots grew deeper, onion grew more layers, leaves were slow changing color, berries were plentiful, bark on trees was thicker, corn shucks and silk was thicker, grass was darker green.

The weather itself was a giveaway. A late frost meant a bad winter, so did a frost before November 23, so did lots of low rolling thunder in the late fall and the hotter the summer, the colder the winter.

Snow was expected within 26 days if smoke from the chimney drifted toward or settled on the ground. There was a chance of snow if smoke rose on a cloudy day. The number of days old the moon was at the first snow told how many snows there would be that winter.

And so, able to anticipate the worst, our forefathers brought extra quilts out of mothballs, stocked their fires and filled the barn to brimful with hay.

Old wives tales? The winter will tell.

