

Question of the Week

A decline in Bingo revenues has been reported by local non-profit organizations. What can be done to replace Bingo revenues?

"The Essex Retirees do miss the money. We are still receiving the same grant money year after year – with no increase. We've been struggling for 10 years on the same income. We are relying on our savings, volunteer fundraising, raffles, bazaars, etc."
– Betty Lou Frith, Essex

"My father is a member of the Knights of Columbus. He rented a chip wagon and brought it to Heritage Village."
– Christine Sunderland, Essex

"We're considering a large yard sale at the high school. We might go door-to-door asking people if we can use anything that they don't want."
– Tim Nighswander, coach of the Essex District High School senior boys' hockey team

Next week's question:

What are some of the pressing issues facing local municipalities in the upcoming election?

A letter to the editor is not necessary. Simply **CALL DAN** at **519-776-4268, ext. 13** to leave your response. You must provide your name and phone number. Please be brief – 25 to 40 words. Deadline for responses: Monday at 9 a.m.

Open house draws input on official plan

BY SARAH FISHER

The Town of Essex hosted an open house Sept. 11 to gather public input on its official plan.

The official plan offers a 20-year guideline for development in the municipality. When the official plan is approved it will replace the official plans for the four different municipalities included in the amalgamation of 1999.

Typically, the plans are reviewed and amendments are made every five years. The town's official plan is dictated by Essex County's official plan and the province's official plan.

At the open house in Harrow several residents voiced their concern with some provincial regulations.

Ann Stefani, who lives on a farm outside of Harrow, questioned why development was not permitted in some areas of the municipality.

"That's something determined by the provincial policy statement," Planner Chad Jeffery said.

Jeffery explained to a small crowd at the Harrow-

Colchester South Recreation Complex that the province's guidelines are developed according to a mandate to preserve agricultural areas. The provincial policy statement encourages development within urban centres and protects agricultural areas. Higher density development within urban areas will give people the opportunity to be less reliant on automobiles and ensure that the city centres fill up before development pushes the boundaries of a municipality, Jeffery said.

"Even though there are people willing to pay for services to go in?" Stefani said.

"Yes," Jeffery answered.

Much of the discussion centred on a provincial decision that changed the conditions for severing farm property. Effective March 1, 2005, retiring farmers in Essex County can no longer stay in their home and sell off their property to buyers who also intend to build a home at the site. Current regulations require retiring farmers who intend to continue living on their homestead to rent out their farmland, or stop farming. Jeffery knows the decision was controversial.

"Nobody told us in 2002 when we started to build," Stefani said.

"I don't know that anybody knew it. It was pretty much thrust upon us,"



Town Planner Chad Jeffery talks about zoning for development during an open house at the Harrow-Colchester South Recreation Complex Sept. 11.

Jeffery said.

Some members of the crowd suggested that the Town of Essex might have had a record of people building homes in agricultural areas that would be affected by the provincial policy statement change. The town could have notified those builders, said George Brackx, who owns property on Lypps Beach.

"We knew 30 days ahead

of time, maybe 60 days," said Ward 3 Councillor Bill Caixeiro. "There wasn't a lot of time ... and that's something that definitely you should be taking up with the province."

Jeffery said council would likely vote on its official plan within the next month.

Two open houses were held in Harrow and Essex Sept. 11 and 12.

Boil water advisory rescinded

Dr. G. Allen Heimann, medical officer of health for the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, has rescinded the boil water advisory for residents near the Harrow/Colchester South Water Treatment Plant.

A report from the office

states that water samples taken from the affected area Sept. 13 and 14 were within provincial standards.

Anyone needing further information is asked to call the Essex Distribution System at 519-776-5291.

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