

Weekender

Comment

Hamlet in jeopardy

The fate of Buttonville is at hand. The zoning of the tiny hamlet just north of Highway 7, on Woodbine Ave., will be the subject of an Ontario Municipal Board hearing which begins Monday at 10 a.m. at the council chambers.

Markham Council proposes an amendment to the Official Plan which would permit a residential zoning to replace the present industrial designation on lands to the east of the historic hamlet.

Council and ratepayers seem united. They'd like to see homes on the land bounded by 16th Ave., the Ontario Hydro corridor, Woodbine Ave. and just north of Apple Creek Blvd., rather than industry, however light.

Certain businessmen have protested the residential zoning, hence the hearing.

The Town, if it receives OMB approval, seems set to spring loose about five developers to build 1,000 new homes in the area. The ratepayers say this is less than ideal, but is the lesser of the two evils.

From the businessmen's point of view, Markham needs industrial land and the access to major arteries is good from the Buttonville location.

Whatever the decision made during the week of hearings coming up, we're concerned that the character of Buttonville hamlet will be destroyed.



Father's Day



Historic Reesor — a real estate entrepreneur

Now here's one for all you local history buffs out there, an historic land deal that should rank right up there with the hosing those crazy Indians took when they parted with Manhattan Island for twenty two bucks worth of cheap trinkets.

The year was 1802, and a bunch of United Empire Loyalists in Pennsylvania were hankering to find themselves under British rule again. It was decided that there were greener pastures to the north in Upper Canada. Now the pastures may have been greener, politically, but it is a mystery to me how anybody with the slightest appreciation of aesthetics would abandon the beautiful contoured landscape of Pennsylvania for the flatlands they eventually settled here in York Region.

Anyway, twenty two year old Peter Reesor, being either expendable, or out of work at the



time, was sent north by horseback to spy out the land for the gang back home. Young Peter made his way to the land office in old muddy York, Toronto the Good. He said he was looking for good land, well timbered, with water, and perhaps an oil field or two for future use.

He was pointed towards Markham, and off he galloped, eager with anticipation. When he saw what is now Cedar Grove, he laid his claim, and prepared to trot on home.

But here is where he encounters this old ex-officer of the British

Army. The Brit, it seems, had his fill of rugged colonial life and was quite anxious to return to his country cottage in England.

"Young man" he addressed the young Mr. Reesor. "I understand that you are looking for land. Now I happen to have 400 acres, about the centre of the township of Whitchurch, which I want to get rid of."

Pete played it close to the vest, responding that he was merely doing a little reconaissance, that he wasn't ready to buy. The ploy worked. The old soldier must

have taken a fancy to Peter. "I will give you these 400 acres for your horse, saddle and bridle."

Pete must have fallen off his horse upon hearing the offer! But he managed to regain his composure in time to accept.

So the Englishman galloped off with the steed, leaving young Peter, grinning like a Cheshire cat, just dying to get back home and show Mom and Dad the deed he had stuffed in his pocket. Only one small problem. What to use for transportation.

Now the trains weren't running too regularly in those days, so the hearty young lad took one look at his dusty boots, said "What the heck", and headed them in the direction of Chambersburg Pennsylvania — a 500 mile trek.

The folks back home got whipped into a frenzy upon seeing Peter hobble into town, blisters and all. Four rugged covered wagons

were assembled, and a trail was blazed through trackless forests and over countless rivers and streams. While part of the entourage stopped off and established the town of Markham, Peter headed straight to the land he had beat the Brit out of, proceeding to raise both a house and a family.

Meanwhile, his brother-in-law, honest Abe Stouffer, headed several miles north, and set up camp in what has become radio personality Tom Rivers' personal Newfie joke, Stouffville. Now had old Abe known the ridicule that this name would bring from ignoramuses from places like Toronto, I'm sure he would have changed his name to Brown, or even Knox!

So to all you Reesors and Stouffers out there, here's to your great, great, great grampas, Peter and Abraham, men of great sinew and courage, and perhaps the shrewdest real estate men this area has ever known.

Economist & Sun

The Tribune

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Weekender

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Published every Saturday by Metroland Printing, Publishing and Distributing at 9 Heritage Rd., Markham, Ontario, L3P 1M3. Tel. 294-2200.
Second class mail registration number 1247.
The Weekender is one of the Metroland group of suburban newspapers which includes The Acton Free Press, Ajax/Pickering News Advertiser, The Aurora Banner, Brampton Guardian, The Burlington Post, The Burlington Weekend Post, The Etobicoke Advertiser/Guardian, The Georgetown Independent, The Markham Economist and Sun, The Milton Champion, The Mississauga News, The Newmarket Era, The Willowdale Mirror, Oakville Beaver, Oakville Friday Beaver, Oshawa/Whitby This Week, Oshawa/Whitby This Weekend, The Richmond Hill Liberal, Thornhill Liberal, The Scarborough Mirror, The Stouffville Tribune and Vaughan Liberal. Metroland Printing, Publishing and Distributing is a division of Harlequin Enterprises Ltd.
NATIONAL SALES REPRESENTATIVE — Metroland Corporate Sales, 493-1300.