

Weekender

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Public meetings questioned

By CHRIS SHANAHAN
The value of public meetings has been questioned by a consultant representing a residential subdivision proposed for Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Hydrologist Brian Whitehead voiced his concern Tuesday during one of these information sessions held for planned OP and zoning amendments for O.T. Baggio's planned 11-lot development. If approved, the subdivision would be built on a 10.3 hectare (25.48-acre) parcel located on the east side of the Ninth Concession Rd.

After more than two hours of objections from residents neighboring the proposed development, Mr. Whitehead addressed the meeting and claimed he knew exactly what all the objections would be even before the session began.

"I have sat through 40 or 50 of these public meetings and the concerns are virtually always the same," he said.

Ward 6 Councillor Jim Sanders took exception to the comment, asking if Mr. Whitehead was inferring that such public meetings are useless?

The hydrologist denied this, and explained his concerns stem from the fact most questions raised during these public forums are addressed by the appropriate government agencies.

Councillor Sanders said he feels the sessions are productive and provide citizen input that proves valuable when it comes time to make planning decisions.

"It's called the democratic process," piped in Bill Hartshorne, one of several Stouffville ratepayers opposing the Baggio subdivision.

"We don't think (this type of development) blends into our area," Mr. Harshorne had earlier told the meeting.

Public meetings must be held under provisions of the Planning Act for all proposed Official Plan and zoning bylaw amendments up for consideration by a municipal council. These sessions are designed to allow input from ratepayers and proponents affected by proposed amendments.

Mr. Whitehead disagreed with opposing residents who claimed, through both verbal and written submissions, that the proposed development would create problems such as water shortages and increased traffic hazards on an already dangerous Ninth Line North. It's also unwise to develop on the environmentally sensitive Oak Rides Moraine, objectors claimed.

In response, the hydrologist said he has determined there's adequate recharge to service the 11 large lots.

"Basically, I feel the subdivision meets all your criteria," he told Councillors.

Mr. Whitehead then asked councillors to approve any necessary studies so the project can proceed through the planning process. The Town has reserved its decision on the Baggio application pending examination of all information gathered at the public meeting.

Mr. Baggio also spoke during the marathon session, refuting contentions that he'd earlier promised his neighbors never to subdivide his property.

The proponent, a civil engineer, also claimed the grade of the road in that area is okay and wasn't a factor in previous car accidents.

Concerns

A total of four public meetings were conducted before Whitchurch-Stouffville Council April 21, including one for proposed OP and zoning amendments for a property at the southwest corner of Woodbine Ave. and Aurora Rd.

Members of Wesley Corners Ratepayers Association appeared to voice objections to planned expansion of the existing Petro Canada operation.

Nick & Gus Service is requesting a zoning change to Highway Commercial to recognize all existing service station uses, plus two proposed uses in a separate new building consisting of 2,700 square feet of neighborhood commercial space.

However, neighboring property owners are concerned about possible traffic congestion and other factors that could disrupt their lifestyle if the building proceeds.



Hall of famers

Many of Markham and Stouffville's past hockey greats gathered at the Markham Centennial Centre Wednesday night for a reunion and establishment of a hall of fame. The first two members are player Jack Watson (left) and

builder John Bayes, shown here with their plaques. The plan is to honor a builder and a player each year. See page 10 for pictures and complete details of the evening.

—Bill Harding

Trout-fishing season opens today

Trout season opens today (April 25) at Bruce's Mill and other area facilities operated by the Metro Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (MTRCA).

Bruce's Mill, located on Stouffville Rd. east of Warden Ave., opens at 8 a.m. during the first weekend of the fishing season. After that, hours at all MTRCA parks are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Anglers can also try their luck at other Authority conservation areas, including Greenwood off Westney Rd. in north Pickering; Glen Haffy, on Airport Rd. just south of Hwy. 9 and Mono Mills; Heart Lake near Brampton; and Albion Hills, located on Hwy. 50 north of Bolton. For more information, contact the MTRCA office at 661-6600.

And in Uxbridge today, Royal

Canadian Legion branch 170 hosts its annual children's fishing derby at Elgin Pond from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Anglers between the ages of 18 and 64 must have a resident sport fishing licence, except for those with physical disabilities. Permits are available at Ministry of Natural Resources district offices and from private issuers.

WHAT'S INSIDE



Bill Vida caught in the middle/46



Laura Weaver picturing Markham's past/14

