

Task force on church sites

By STEVE HOUSTON
Staff Reporter

A "religious needs" task force will be created later this year in response to Markham's new rural area bylaw that prohibits churches in the town's outlying areas.

The task force is expected to address church site and religious needs of various groups in and around Markham.

Church officials, town staff and local politicians are expected to make up the group.

The task force will also deal with Markham's diminishing church sites that have been designated within those town limits.

But many of the in-town sites are at premium prices, and in many cases, too expensive for religious groups, says Regional Councillor Bud Bonner.

Bonner said many local church congregations have outgrown current facilities, resulting in numerous applications for site expansion, building additions and new facilities.

He also said the town has had to release land for development after being set aside for religious uses within growing subdivisions.

New churches have since been constructed outside the town's traditional urban boundary. The rural area bylaw must now be amended to allow churches, he added.

But Markham Councillor Gord Landon claims some applications received by town planning staff are for churches that don't serve local residents.

He added that the preference for sites north of town boundaries is based on cheaper land prices and the need for larger sites.

Prior to the town's rural area bylaw, that prohibits church uses unless they serve outlying areas, applications were multiplying, he said.

"What we were finding was that every corner in the rural area was going to be a church," Landon said recently. "We want to establish a framework to see where we can accommodate them in the town."

He said Markham would likely compromise with groups that have outgrown facilities, and noted that churches are more frequently used for non-religious purposes.

Local clubs, day-care agencies and private school organizations now use churches on off-service days, Landon pointed out.

But he questioned the possibility of outside church groups using Markham for new sites and said the task force will address that question.

"There are a number of sites needed," Landon said. "But it's a matter of 'are we going to provide for church needs in our area, or for the needs of the Metro Toronto area.'"

Bonner said the task force will have to deal with Markham's diverse religious denominations, and their various beliefs will influence their requests.

For example, the requirements of certain religions may effect site selection.

"The task force has to take in church denominations no matter what they are," Bonner noted. "It won't be looking strictly at sites, it will be looking at their other needs."

Vandals set fire on roof

By PAUL PIVATO
Staff Reporter

A drunken roof-top party turned ugly last weekend when vandals burst a gas line and set a Markham industrial building on fire.

Local firefighters doused a fuel-fed blaze atop the Ontario Decal building on Riviera Dr. early Sunday morning.

Fire Chief Ken Beckett said the roof was littered with empty liquor bottles and the parking lot below was strewn with broken glass.

Vandals used a concrete block to puncture a natural gas line and tore vents off the roof, said Chief Beckett.

A rooftop unit heater was destroyed by the flames and water seaped into the building through the vent holes. Firefighters had to scrape away about 100 square feet of burnt asphalt on the roof.

"It doesn't look like much from the road but there's a lot of damage up there," said Chief Beckett.

Damage to the building is estimated at \$60,000.

Company sales manager Peter Romer said the incident has left employees "baffled."

"It sure as hell scares you when they do these sort of things," he said. "Was it straight vandalism and stupidity or was it planned?"

Romer suspects that the person who lit the fire with a lighter was burned by a fireball when the gas ignited and now has burns to the hands or face.

"I hope they find somebody," he added. "You lie in bed at night and wonder is someone else there?"



Markham Firefighters (number four station) sped to 42 Riviera Dr. in Markham early Sunday morning to douse a fire started by an explosion. The building is occupied by Ontario Decal. — Bill Lanning

Trustees want 13 projects funded

By DEB BODINE CHAMPION

The York Region Separate School Board is hitting the Ministry of Education hard with a plea for completion of 13 projects for 1988—two in Markham and one in Stouffville.

The five-year capital expenditure forecast of the York Region Separate School Board was ratified Tuesday.

At the number three position on the list of priorities is a new school in Milliken Mills—the fourth separate school in the area. On last year's five-year forecast, the project was placed at number 15, slated for completion in 1990. Due to the rapid development of the area north of Steeles Avenue, east of McCowan Road, the school is intended for completion next fall, pending government allocations of funds.

Enrollment in the Milliken Mills area increased 22.6 per cent between Sept. 30, 1986 and Sept. 9, 1987.

The new Milliken School will accommodate 668 pupils. It is to be located on Featherstone Ave., south of Denison St.

Mother Teresa Catholic School is number eleven on the 1988 priority list. Upon completion, 350 pupils would be accommodated in a 10-pack addition to the present school.

A 10-pack is a group of 10 portables contained under a common roof. It is the preferred method of increasing classroom space in

areas where it is uncertain that additional space will be required in the future.

"We have to guarantee future pupil places with the Ministry," explained Ken Bourrie, Manager of Services. "Otherwise, we may have trouble getting new schools allocated because of the empty pupil places."

The construction of a permanent addition to St. Mark Catholic School in Stouffville is 10th on the priority list for fall 1988 completion, designed to accommodate 350 students.

A new Milliken Mills Catholic Secondary School is included in the five-year capital expenditure forecast, scheduled for opening in 1989. The school will house 1,500 students, but the location is not yet known.

"I don't know how this new government will view this," said John Zupancic, Director of Education. "They have a big majority and we'll have to work hard to make our views known."

The York Region Separate School Board has placed three high schools on the list of priorities for 1989: phase II of St. Elizabeth High School in Thornhill, North Central Catholic High School in Aurora and the Milliken Mills project.

The separate school board is hoping for special allocation of funds this fall, in order to get the top priority projects started as quickly as possible.

Giant complex coming

By STEVE HOUSTON
Staff Reporter

Markham has pulled off another corporate coup.

Mayor Carole Bell will announce Monday details of a new multi-million dollar development plan being undertaken by the Inducon Development Corp.

Bell said yesterday, the development compares with those of the Seltzer Organization and the President's Choice development that nears one million square feet in size.

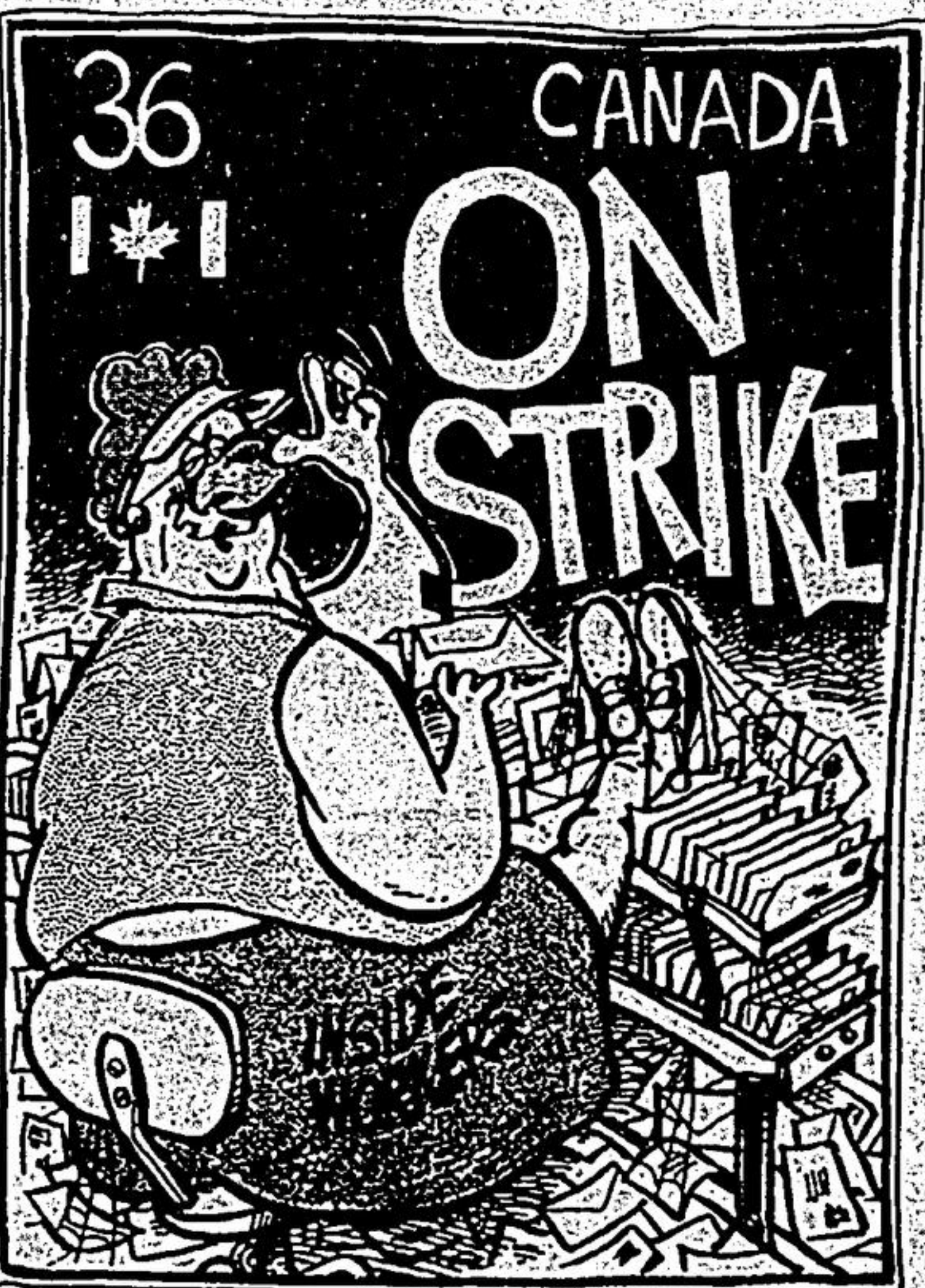
She also said this latest corporate acquisition will generate more tax dollars and jobs for the town and its residents.

This development is the third major announcement within a year.

Last fall the Seltzer group announced plans for a multi-million dollar Buttonville office development while a President's Choice project nearby joined the town in the new year.

"This is sort of typical of what's happening in Markham with the investment that developers are willing to make," said Bell yesterday. "Every new building that goes up is a huge new job creation program."

She said the project will prompt a visit to Premier David Peterson to relay the town's demand for a much-needed Hwy. 407.



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