

Graphic examples

AIDS program may raise parents' ire

By PAUL PIVATO
Staff Reporter

Condoms and artificial penises may be brought into Markham classrooms as part of an AIDS education program approved by public school trustees this week. Warning trustees to be prepared for angry phone calls, Director of Education Bob Cressman told board members the new program "cannot skirt issues."

And one of those controversial issues, he said, included showing students how to use a condom in order to prevent AIDS and other venereal diseases.

"Are we going to see artificial penises and condoms in the classroom?" he said. "Let's not have any surprises. This is a program...that cannot skirt issues."

Cressman referred to a recent dispute in Calgary where irate parents want to eliminate an AIDS education program from the schools.

He then urged the board to

bring any potentially controversial issues "out into the open."

Jean McLafferty, a member of the York Region AIDS Committee, confirmed that some teachers will bring condoms into the classroom and show students how they are used.

But Unionville Trustee Anne Atkins said explicit measures such as demonstrating how to use a condom may be unacceptable to Unionville residents.

She said "people should have the option to exclude children" from the program.

Staff members told trustees that since the new AIDS curriculum falls under the board's family life and sex education program, parents can exempt their children from the class.

Trustees were generally enthusiastic about the new AIDS education program, which was designed by the Ministry of Education.

Richmond Hill Trustee Janet Mabley said that in the case of AIDS awareness, "ignorance is not bliss."

"People can stick their heads in the sand if they want to," she said. "Their heads may be protected but the rest of their bodies will be exposed to this particular virus (AIDS)."

The new program, which stresses sexual abstinence and "responsible sexual decision-making," will start in Grade 7 and continue through to Grade 12.

The board will sponsor AIDS Implementation Workshops for parents beginning in early December. The first local workshop is slated for Wednesday, Dec. 9 at Unionville High School.

Parents will be informed about upcoming workshops through school newsletters.

Markham OP off to province

By STEVE HOUSTON
Staff Reporter

The town of Markham approved its new Official Plan (OP) Tuesday after nearly a year of public controversy and debate.

A small group of local residents and developers made final comments and it will now be forwarded to the provincial government for final approval.

Town officials heard again from local conservationist Stephen Marshall — representing Save the Rouge Valley System — and referred his recommendation for land conservation policies in the OP to Planning Director Tom Januszewski.

Markham Councillor Gord Landon said the town will likely dictate conservation needs on a per site basis.

But the town refused to act on a request by a local developer to allow industrial growth north of Major Mackenzie Dr. west of Woodbine Ave.

Mayor Carole Bell said ample opportunity was given to the public to provide opinions on the plan, and added that it will permit more moderate growth than in past years.

"The plan may not be all things to all people but I believe we've done our very best," said the mayor.



Whoops

A driver for Gottardo Bros. lifted his bucket and hit overhead wires Monday afternoon, pulling down the stoplight. The mishap occurred at McCowan Rd. and 14th Ave. causing traffic tie-ups and snarled tempers as well as wires.

— Sjoerd Witteveen

Preschool centre in tight squeeze

By STEVE HOUSTON
Staff Reporter

A Buttonville nursery school owner will likely have to find a new facility in 1988, after notice was given by the town that it wouldn't renew its annual lease.

But parents whose children attend the Kiddies Country Preschool in the town-owned Women's Institute building on Woodbine Ave. plan to petition the town for reconsideration.

Owner Cindy Rudolph-Smith was notified in July that her lease wouldn't be renewed this year. She will have to vacate the building after August, 1988.

Rudolph-Smith has been in the Women's Institute building for the last three years, after parents helped the school relocate when it had to move from Markham Pentecostal Church.

But Regional Councillor Ron Moran cautioned that the town hasn't decided what it will do with the building.

He added that the preschool, whose only access is from the town headquarters parking lot, has been the cause of parking congestion.

He said a meeting will be scheduled to consider uses for the building and is aware of the petition being circulated by local parents.

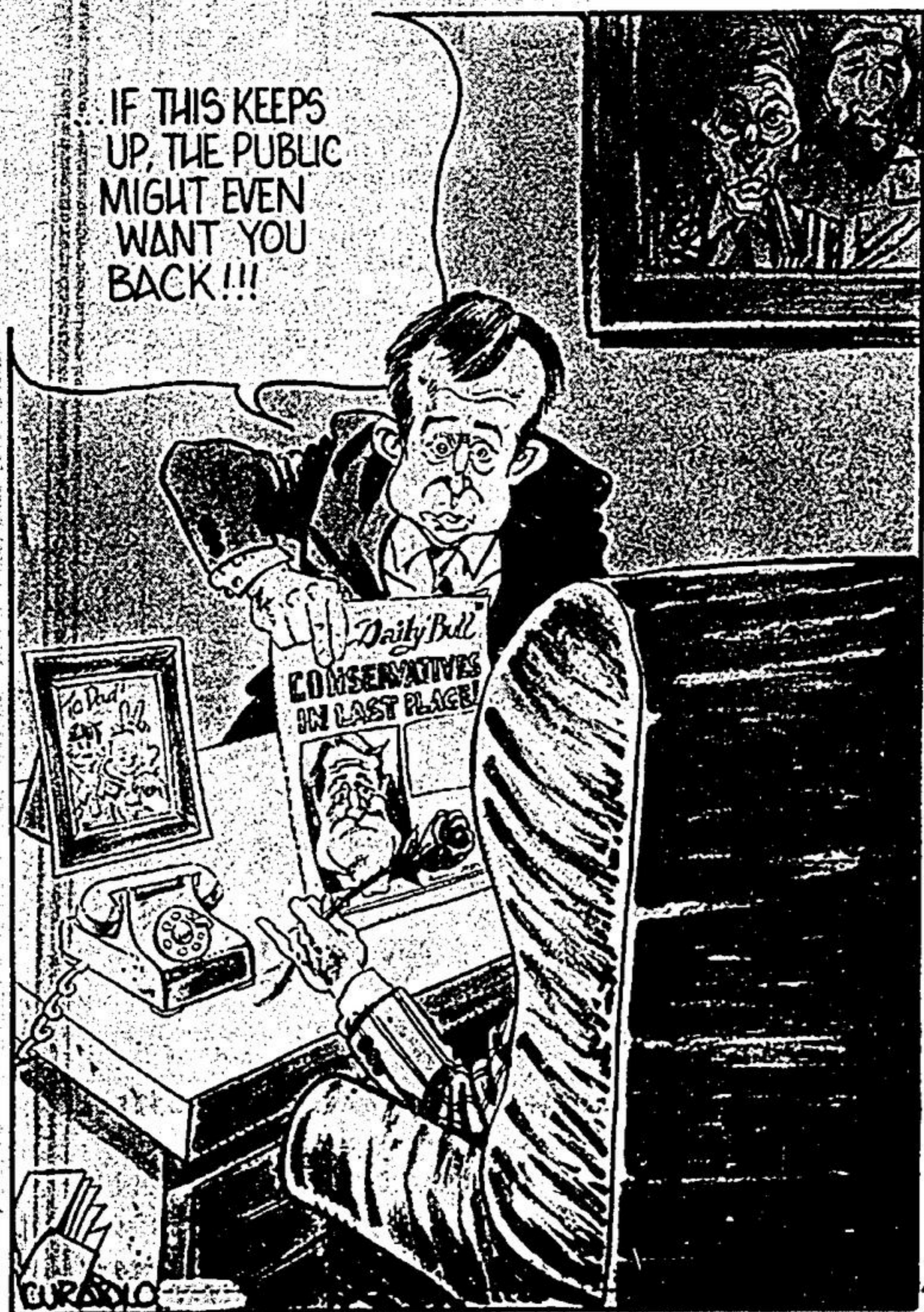
The building could be turned into a community centre for the Buttonville community, he added.

"It leaves our options open. The owner can come before us," Moran said in an interview. "But we keep getting asked for space all over. We can't be a real estate body."

Rudolph-Smith fears space shortages in the town will stymie efforts to relocate the preschool.

But she said support and involvement of parents will be ongoing to aid in finding a new preschool location.

"Right now we have nowhere to go," she said. "There's a real lack of facilities in the area."



Big three tough with province

By STEVE HOUSTON
Staff Reporter

Markham has followed Richmond Hill and Vaughan in a unanimous vote to petition the province for special funding privileges in high growth areas.

Members debated Tuesday before passage of a resolution identical to that of Richmond Hill and Vaughan. Those two municipalities also unanimously favored the plan.

But if legislation doesn't come, the three will demand a review of York Region's political structure to "recognize the need for equity," to provide urban services.

However, most councillors emphasized that the town isn't criticizing the region in its operation or of its disbursement of funds for high growth areas like Markham.

The town says the intent of the resolution is to garner more of the provincial pie to meet service demands growth has placed on municipalities like Markham, Vaughan and Richmond Hill.

"There are other levels of government (the province) that are not acting responsibly when it comes to pouring money back into this and other communities," said Regional Councillor Frank Scarpitti at the meeting.

Scarpitti was successful at Regional Council on Thursday to have a report prepared outlining monies being spent in Markham by York government.

But Thornhill Councillor Mike Popovich bluntly stated that the three municipalities, which make up two-thirds of York's population, might consider withdrawing from the regional scheme.

He also said the town shouldn't be concerned about "implied messages," contained in the resolution.

"Saying (the plan) is not a critic-

ism of York Regional government doesn't necessarily mean it isn't a criticism," said Popovich. "Obviously something is wrong. Perhaps we should see some of the benefits of not belonging to York Region."

Regional Chairman Eldred King said he disputes any allegations that the southern municipalities are being shortchanged by the region in its funding policies.

He also denied that the move by the three will cause a political rift between York's northern and southern municipalities.

Using general tax levy contributions for roads construction from the three, King pointed out that each has been given more than any other municipality for roads projects.

In Markham, he said taxpayers contributed \$1.24 million for roads projects this year, whereas some \$5.8 million is committed for construction.

"I don't think this is necessarily going to cause a split," said the Chairman. "They need some additional urban services, but we've all been fighting for them."

But Markham Councillor Gord Landon said the town isn't pointing fingers. He said there is just "not enough money to go around."

Regional Councillor Ron Moran said a review of the regional structure could improve funding inequities, but noted that a meeting with provincial officials is imperative.

He said the Ontario government has to have special policies entrenched that react to high growth areas in need of additional funding for roads, schools, and social services.

"I think the region is doing as well as it possibly can with the funds they have," Moran noted.

Local firms hit by theft

Concord Transportation and Harmac Ltd. — two companies located on 14th Ave. — were broken into last weekend, said police.

Thieves made off with \$5,220 in cash from Concord Transportation and took another \$3,814 in cash from Harmac, police said.