

# Stouffville addresses affordable housing

By JEFF YOUNG

The housing crisis in Whitchurch-Stouffville is a "Spiral Staircase," with problems being bounced from the Province to the Region and in turn back to the municipalities, according to Town Mayor Fran Sainsbury.

Whitchurch-Stouffville has always been, and will continue to be a developing area, however gradual. Housing sites abound in communities such as Preston's Lake, Vandorf and Musselman's Lake. In fact, Vandorf and Wesley Corners could easily be viewed as extended residential and service clusters."

However, of prime concern is the land being used for such new developments.

According to Whitchurch-Stouffville's Official Plan, "agricultural land uses are sought to be maintained." However, whether the Town is seriously maintaining this edict, is questionable.

In a recent interview, Mayor Sainsbury voiced a number of frustrations pertaining to the housing issue.

Affordable housing, a concern of several church groups and private citizens, she claims, is a lengthy process involving many pitfalls.

She cites the procedure as beginning with the Town discussing plans with the Ministry of Housing. From there, the Town negotiates the purchase of land from owners, provided the area is deemed appropriate for Town use.

The second problem stems from determining who should receive top housing priority.

Mayor Sainsbury feels the emphasis should be directed towards young people, particularly young married couples.

However, transportation and day care would have to be improved substantially.

Creating the right type of housing atmosphere presents yet another dilemma.

"When the wolf comes in the door, love flies out the window, and the police arrive," says Mayor Sainsbury, adding she doesn't want to see a type of housing created ill-suited to the rest of the municipality.

However, she states housing in Whitchurch-Stouffville will not be allowed to take over the Town.

"There are several members on council who would like to put a picket fence around this Town and keep it exactly the way it is. They think it's wonderful and I agree. The only problem is you can stagnate. Anybody who doesn't work, or put money in the bank, has no economic base, and it's no time before they go under. The same applies to a Town. You have to keep something coming in to bring money in."

However, she has reassurance for citizens concerned about cautious growth.

Area farms alone compose 82 square miles (52,000 acres,) with York Region's forests, kettle lakes, conservation areas and golf courses serving as 'buffers.'

"I'd like to see a farm base maintained," says Mayor Sainsbury, adding slow growth seems to be the rule in hamlets.

The mayor continued, she's "trying to attract industry to equalize the tax base," although the question then would be how to ensure Whitchurch-Stouffville residents are guaranteed these jobs. If outsiders encroach, an influx of people would press even harder their concerns over presently available housing.

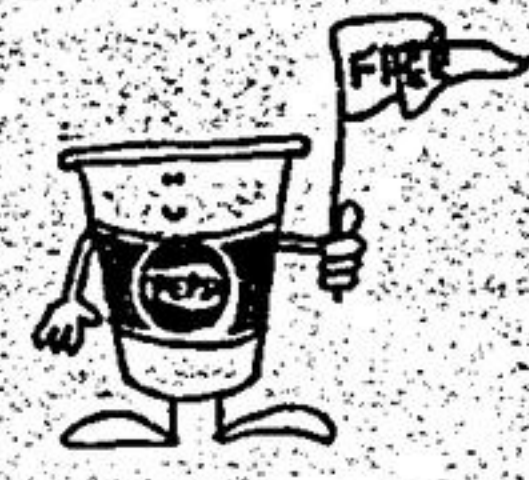
According to Wanda Kerr of Century 21 Armour in Markham, the average price of a property in Whitchurch-Stouffville as of December, 1987, was \$219,552, a figure not easily afforded by young couples just starting out. This being the case, it would appear places to live within many families means are not available in Whitchurch-Stouffville.



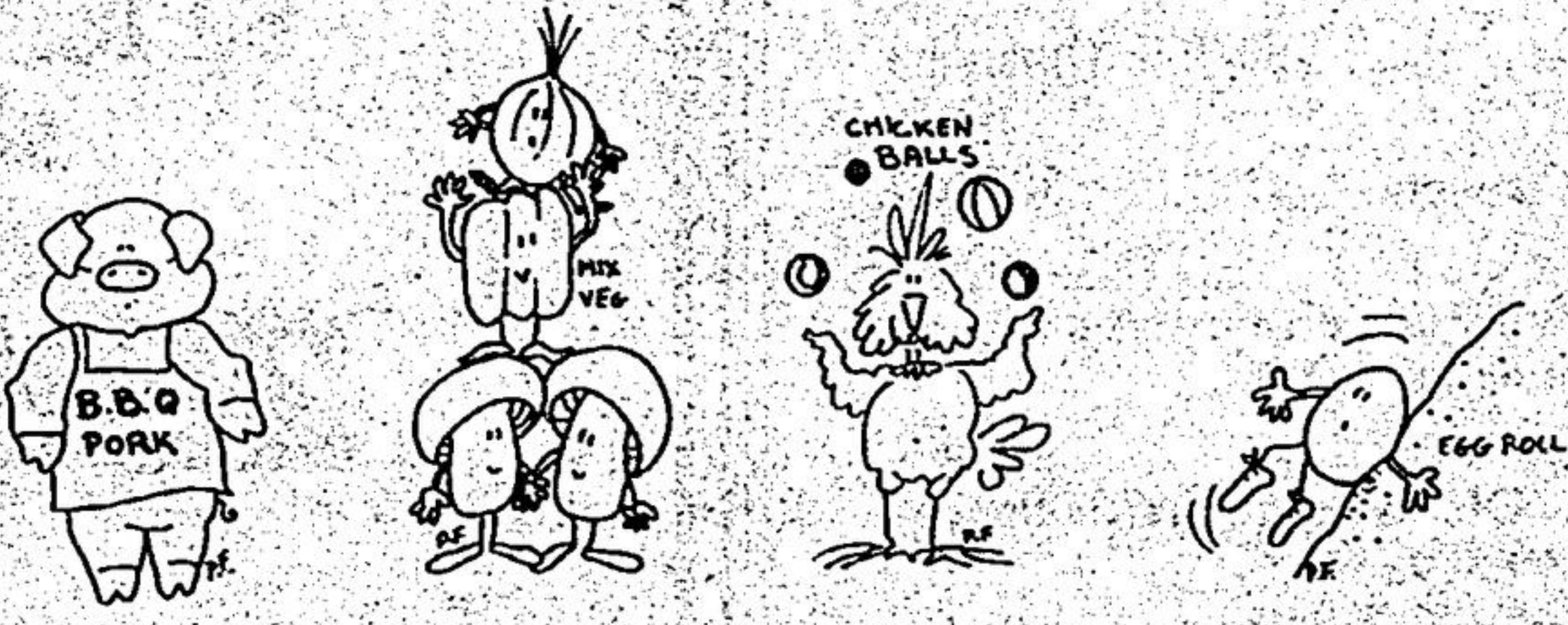
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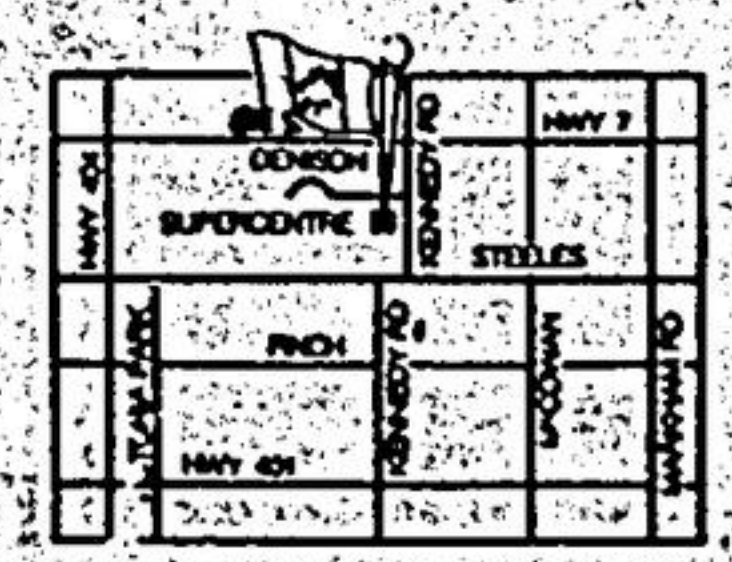
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