

Stouffville BIA asks for flower funds to beautify downtown

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

The local Business Improvement Area is asking town assistance to beautify Whitchurch-Stouffville but Council is hesitant to oblige the merchants' group.

Hanging plants on Stouffville's Main Street is an "enticement to create a more positive atmosphere for downtown businesses," said BIA president Sandra Stronach at last Tuesday's council in committee meeting.

However, the BIA's 'beautification' budget doesn't stretch as far as the business section from Park Street to Albert Street.

Then BIA is asking the Town to contribute \$7,000 - \$2,000 more than the taxpayers paid last year to maintain the assorted flower arrangements.

The downtown core needs 81 baskets of flowers and 50 hanging planters to be extended from the street light poles, Mrs. Stronach explained.

She said the BIA is cutting the number of baskets in half from last year's total of 162, which cost \$27,000.

"Last year we had two baskets extended from each pole. But one good planter per pole is better than having two," she said.

But Council has hesitated to accommodate the group in its bid

to obtain the \$7,000.

"I'm finding it hard (to accept) looking at \$19,000 (total budget) for flowers," said Ward 3 Councillor Nick Tatone.

But Councillor Tatone's suggesting to have the Town's volunteer fire crews take on the watering and maintenance job caused an uncomfortable stir from Whitchurch-Stouffville Fire Chief Bill Brown and the rest of those in attendance.

"I'm sorry, I just find it hard to tell taxpayers they're paying \$7,000 to hang plants," Mr. Tatone added.

Mrs. Stronach said the group was quoted a maintenance price of \$1 a basket, three times a week. The tender would include a total package of hanging, watering and taking the baskets off the poles in the fall.

"We're trying to do what we can with what we've got," Mrs. Stronach said.

After Council's suggestions that the BIA ask various service clubs to get involved and perhaps have volunteers take on the responsibility of maintaining planter each, Mrs. Stronach said she would see what else she could come up with.

The town agreed to look at the Feb. 5 preliminary budget to see how much it could spare for the project.



Figures of speech

The Stouffville branch of the Royal Canadian Legion hosted local students last Saturday in a public speaking contest. About 20 competitors from around the area, including Stouffville, Markham, Unionville and Thornhill,

took part in the event. Here, four of winners discuss their technique. From left is Jessica Smith, Tracy Wilock, Glenn Tanzo and Natasha Noreiga. Jessica and Tracy won in the Grade 4-6 category. The others were in Grades 7-8.

Group wants gun range

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Former police officers want the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville to amend its firearms bylaw so they can open a shooting gallery behind the dairy bar east of Woodbine Ave. off Stouffville Rd.

Trillium Sports owners told council Jan. 23 the firing of guns at positioned targets in an enclosed area is "a very safe sport."

Company President and Director of the Shooting Federation of Canada, Don Hinchley told local politicians they were "attracted to your community for a number of reasons" including the convenience and accessibility of Hwy. 404.

The current firearms bylaw will not allow discharging of bullets but the ex-police partners pointed out the bylaw does not mention the discharge of firearms in an enclosed area.

Trillium Sports gun club would be under the control of the Federal Statutes of Firearms and the Chief Provincial Firearms office and would follow Ministry of Environment guidelines, Mr. Hinchley said during the 30-minute presentation.

Each member would be eligible for the Ontario Handgun Association certificate insured for \$1 million personal liability and property damage, he added.

"We three partners are leaders in shooting sports and we would not do anything to bring discredit to this community."

But the mention of guns triggered a debate with Ward 6 Councillor Jim Sanders.

"The fact that there are guns available to people gives more chance of injury or death. I don't think we need to encourage that in Whitchurch-Stouffville," Councillor Sanders said.

"There has only been one fatality at shooting ranges in Ontario. We're not Rambos," Mr. Hinchley answered.

"But the availability of guns increases the number of gun-related accidents," Councillor

Sanders persisted.

"The fact is the number of fatalities (by firearms) is diminishing. Of the 642 homicides in Canada last year 1/3 were caused by firearms," said Mr. Hinchley.

The owners also want to make the guns available to young people

to "teach teens the proper use and safe use of firearms."

The guns used would be .22 calibre small boar rifles, semi-automatics and handguns.

Council voted to have staff look over the information and make a recommendation at an upcoming council meeting.

Festival plans underway

Whitchurch-Stouffville brace yourself! This year's Strawberry Festival celebration hopes to be the 'berry' best summer party of all time for the friendliest town in Ontario.

But like any ongoing event, hard work and community involvement have been the key to this party's continued success.

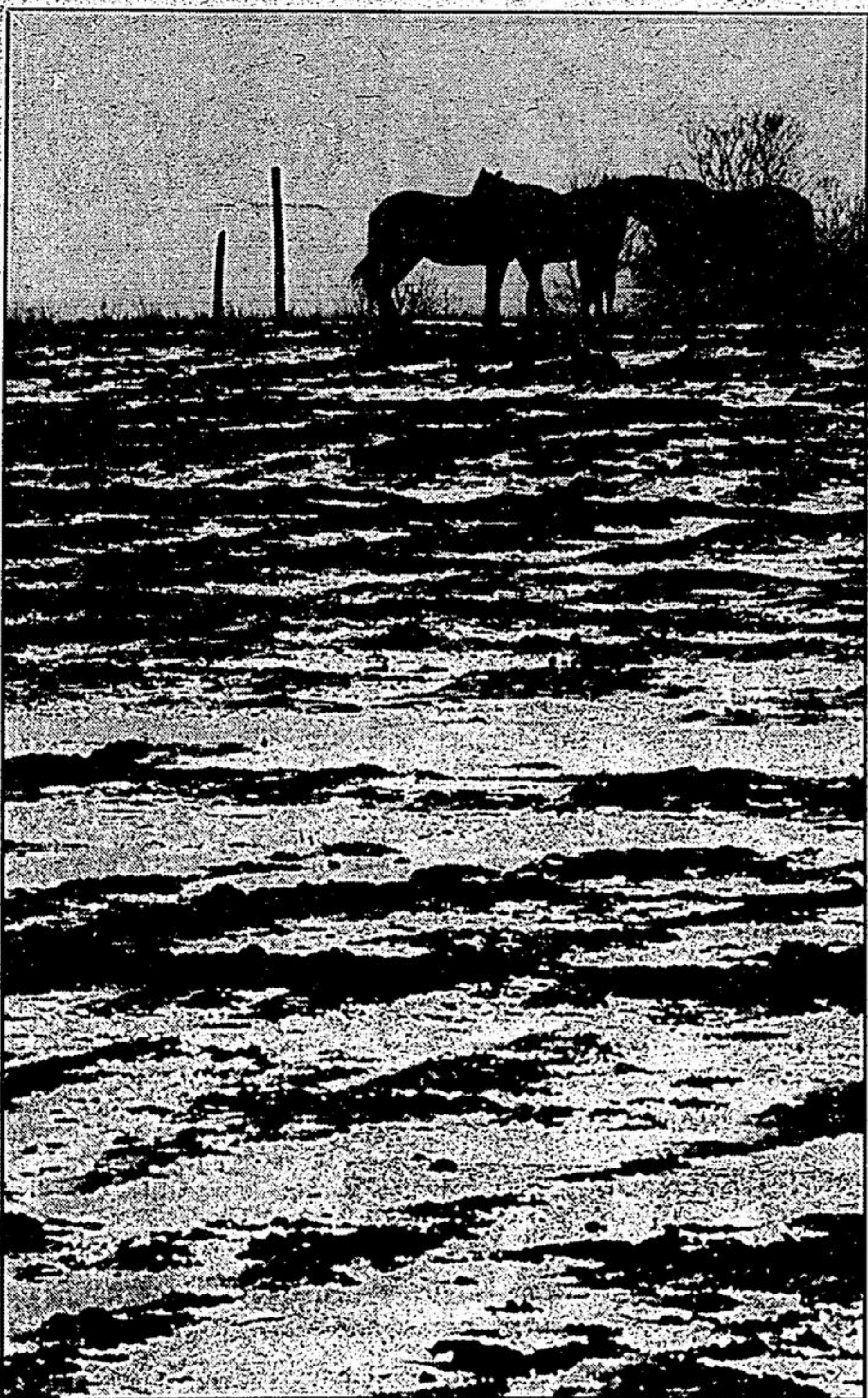
The Strawberry Festival organizers are always looking for new ideas and new involvement for Stouffville's "summer kick-off" celebration, says co-chairman Patricia Radcliff.

Meetings, open to the public, are held every month and the organizers are hoping Whitchurch-Stouffville residents will come out and give their support. The next meeting will be held in the Rec Centre board room Feb. 13 at 7:30 p.m.

"Everyone adds a different dimension. The main idea is to give Stouffville a party. Our attitude: The Strawberry Festival is a free gift to the town."

This year, for the June 30 kick-off, Mrs. Radcliff says the group needs someone to sponsor the pet contest.

For more information on how to get involved with this year's seventh annual Strawberry Festival call Patricia Radcliff at 640-5076 or attend the Feb. 13 meeting at the Rec Complex.



Silhouettes

The morning sunshine weather run-off formed small pools on the open fields at the farm, located on Stouffville area farm last Saturday morning. Warm, Kennedy Road.

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