

# Stouffville Tribune

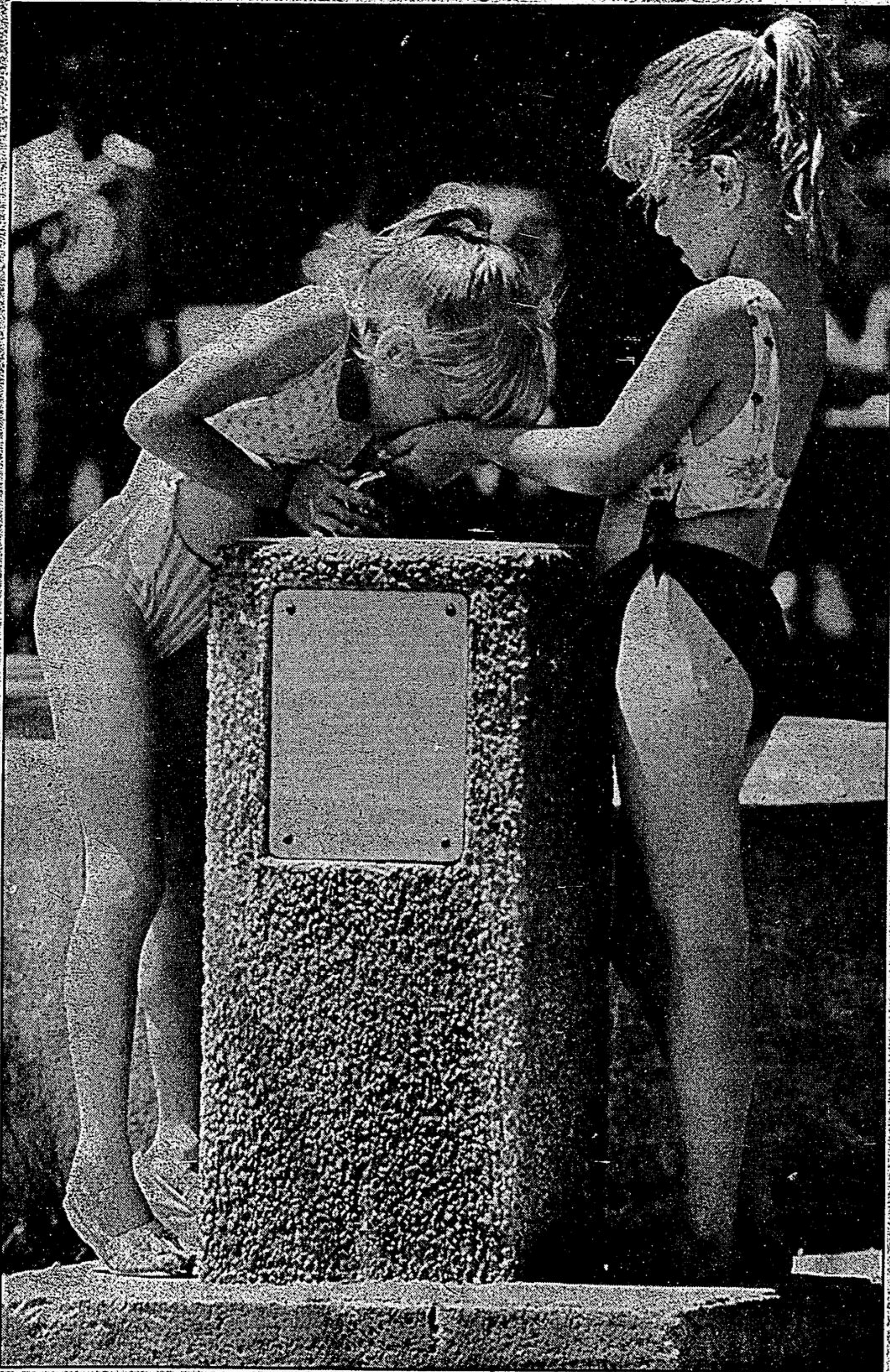
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photo/RICK MADONIK

## Helping hands

The hot and humid days of summer stopped for a visit in Stouffville on the weekend, prompting local residents to seek the air-conditioned cool of the indoors, or the shade of an elm while outdoors. The hot weekend weather also meant that the fountain in the Town Park was a big

attraction for sun-seekers. Here, seven-year-old Amber Lomas (right) helps her cousin Sabra Hart, 6, cool off with a splash of water. The two spent part of the day at the outdoor pool in the park before stepping out for a drink of cold water.

## Parents lash out in battle for stoplight

TRACY KIBBLE  
Staff Reporter

Stoplights at Summitview Public School should be up and operating no later than August 20, angry members of the school's Parents/Teacher Association were told by Town staff last Thursday night.

But parents, skeptical the land battle issue will be resolved before August 20, said they "don't believe the Town anymore."

"We have no confidence. The board has spilled more of its guts than you. You meet in your little meetings and we never know what's going on. We don't believe you," said Sue Sherban, president of the PTA.

Tempers flared, emotions rose and accusations flew in the school's auditorium at the meeting regarding stoplights for the Stouffer/Main Street intersection.

Nearly 90 angry residents filed into the gym to tell school board and Town officials exactly what they think of a lingering money battle between the two parties.

The York Region Board of Education (YRBE) and the Town have refused to budge on a land transfer deal the parents said should not be the issue. Instead the two parties should be concerned for the children's safety, the group maintained.

The Town and Board are fighting over a small parcel of land needed to construct the lights, and to make a bus turn lane off Main Street. The board wants to swap a tiny corner piece it owns fronting Main Street (formerly the Byer property) for the thin College Street strip (that runs alongside the school) and remaining parkland.

"Why does the Town want College Street anyway? It's useless to you. It's unmaintained and dangerous for the Kindergarten kids who play a table-width away," said Jennifer Goodbrand.

But neither side can come to an agreement to swap ownership because the board won't offer what the Town feels the land is worth, and the Town says the board refuses to meet with them and is offering far less than the current market value of the land.

"Why are you fighting over money? It's our damn money anyway," said Sue Joyce.

In front of a panel including Ward 5 Councillor Doug Alles and Ward 6 Councillor Jim Sanders, Whitchurch-Stouffville school board trustee and Board Chairman Harry Bowes, and Mrs. Sherban, parents lashed out at the Town, and knocked Mayor Fran Sainsbury for her absence at the meeting.

"Where is Mayor Fran? At the (Markham Stouffville) Hospital campaigning and looking for votes for her MPPship?" shouted Mrs. Goodbrand.

"As far as the Town goes, we want the lights. We're going to get them and that's exactly what we intend to do," said Councillor Sanders in his opening statement.

Mr. Bowes, however, was prepared with facts dating back to 1967, and cited agreements made with the Town in 1979 until now.

"The Town has been looking to get the best out of this deal from way back. We've had lots of negotiations and studies. We closed a deal August 20, 1989 for \$400,000. That's what the YRBE put on the table with the understanding of a friendly exchange of land," Mr. Bowes said.

He also maintained the Board gave the Town land for the GO Train for free and "made a verbal deal that the Town would fund 50 per cent of the running track. Now they allocate \$40,000 - that won't even build one tennis court. I have a signed deal from 1984 that says the Town would build three tennis courts and bleachers. Where are they?" Mr. Bowes said.

"I don't know what kind of values and morals your children will learn if this type of thing goes on. It's your money and your land. I don't know where common sense is going to prevail," Mr. Bowes continued.

"I've just heard a lot of rhetoric here with quite a few statements as to who is to blame. But the bottom line is the exchange of land and maybe the pressure from this group will force the negotiations to continue. And if the YRBE would meet with us we would get this resolved," Councillor Sanders countered.

"You say you want the best interests of the taxpayer. Well then deed those lands to the board for \$2 - that's in the best interests of the taxpayer," Jennifer Goodbrand shouted to Town officials, while the audience applauded.

The parents vowed if the two parties did not solve the issue they would picket across Main Street and in front of the Town offices.

The board and the Town agreed to meet June 20 to continue negotiations.



HARRY BOWES  
Common sense?

### REPTILES



### SLO-PITCH

Buttermakers  
win track  
journey  
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### GOSSIP

