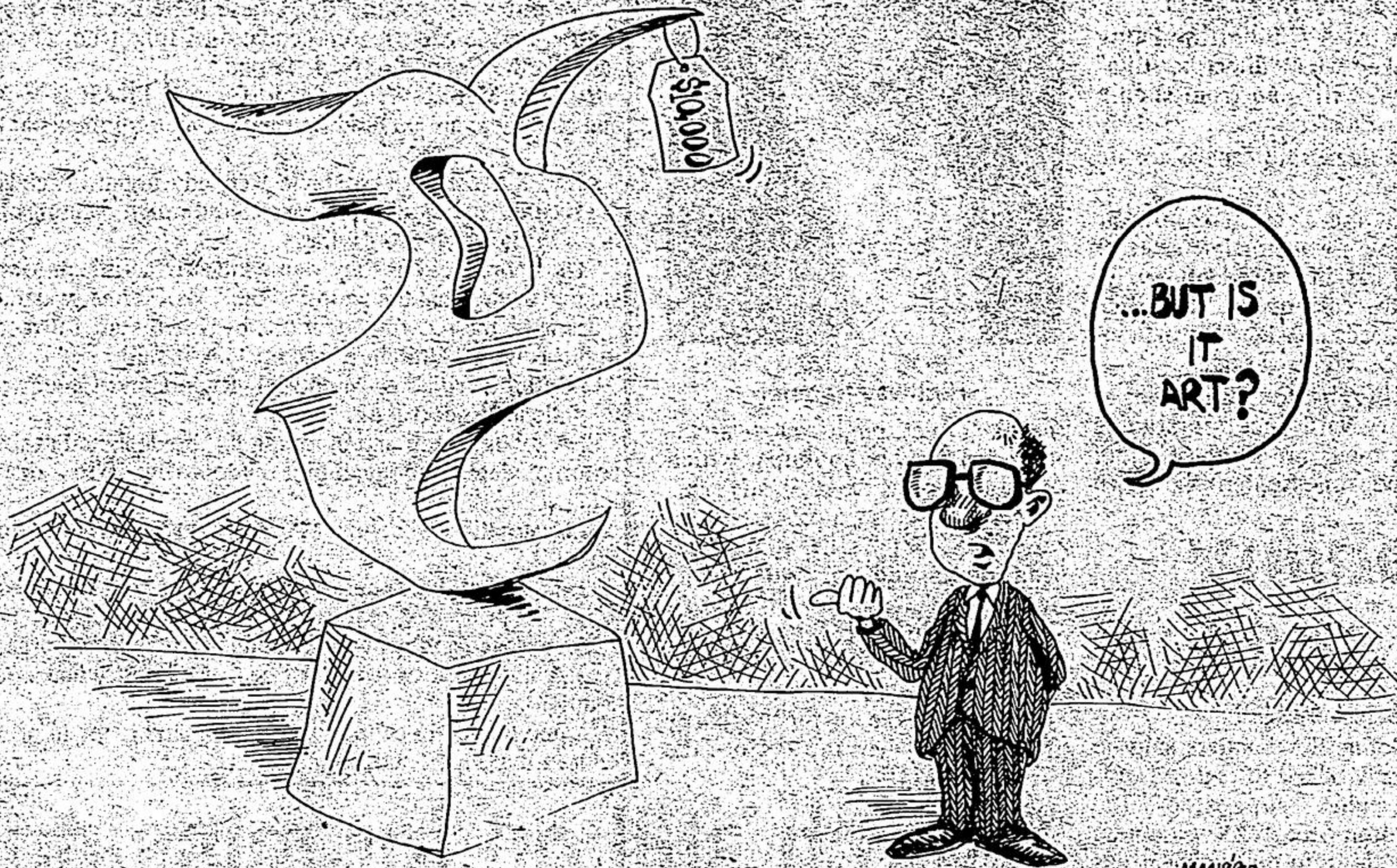


Comment Page

NEWS ITEM: STOUFFVILLE TO GET ABSTRACT SCULPTURE



Problems with 911

Whitchurch-Stouffville Town Council is under fire from local residents as it works to do its part for York Region's 911 emergency phone system.

Among other things, Whitchurch-Stouffville is trying to eliminate duplicated street addresses to most efficiently identify local homes.

Consequently, it must do away with north/south designations on several of its streets.

Unfortunately, there has been a backlash from some residents who don't realize the necessity of having their addresses changed.

Indeed, one resident has flatly refused to comply with the plan.

But residents, who have long been without the much-needed 911 system, must suffer this minor inconvenience - at least as it relates to the 911 service.

Consider the implications of losing even one life if emergency crews, in a crisis situation, have to make a decision between north and south, or east and west.

If that decision is incorrect, an individual or family - possibly, someone you know - could suffer.

We must comply with York Region and Whitchurch-Stouffville in bringing in the 911 system.

Dream home search a nightmare

Picture this: You're stuck in a darkened room that is six feet wide by 20 feet long with 30 other people, the temperature is quickly rising and you start to sway, wondering if you're feet, which were once solidly planted, will continue to hold you up.

As you consider the lesser evil of sitting down before you fall down in front of 30 strangers, a sharp voice cuts through the dark, ordering you (and others) to pay attention "because this part is extremely important."

Sound like a bad dream? It was, in a way.

The scenario took place in a dilapidated trailer on a building site in Newmarket last month, as my wife, Cheryl, and I listened to a salesman drone on about the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity being offered to first-time home



at random

steve houston

buyers by his development corporation.

And the gentleman made it quite clear - several times - that we would be silly not to take advantage of the offer.

It was all part of an arrangement between the development corporation and the Town of Newmarket in its affordable housing initiative to get first-time buyers into the housing market.

It's a great idea, particularly for those of us who have been scrimping in recent years to get enough money together for a

downpayment on a first home. But the approach by the company, considering its apparent belief that first-time buyers are an uneducated and unsophisticated bunch unworthy of any sincere service, was nothing short of offensive.

By way of background, let me tell you that the building site has been pegged as a development of townhomes starting at \$130,000. The Town of Newmarket is offering first-time buyers a \$20,000 "forgivable" mortgage with a proviso that the purchasers live in the townhomes for two years.

I offer congratulations to the Town of Newmarket for leading the way with this initiative; it is sure to open the door for many, like us, who would be unable to buy a house otherwise.

But from the start of this experience, we were aghast at the blatant buy-now, worry-later approach taken by the development company.

Editor's mail

New MPP thanks electorate

Dear Editor,
I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all the voters in the riding of Durham-York.

Being elected as your Member of Provincial Parliament is indeed a great honor and responsibility.

I will endeavor in the years ahead to serve you faithfully.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the workers who toiled tirelessly on my behalf. The campaign was successful because of their work.

With our "preferred" appointment set for 8:30 p.m., we arrived at the aforementioned trailer, full of hope that this would be the place where we would own our first home.

Upon arrival we were ushered into the "reception area" - a tiny room filled to capacity by about 25 other housing hopefuls.

We were left there for 40 minutes, waiting to be herded into the sales area to hear the company's pitch.

I say herded, because that was exactly what occurred. Every person in that tiny room looked nervously about, wondering, I'm sure, who would faint first.

Later, the salesman arrived, and began making his pitch. It was clear, however, that he would tolerate no foolishness.

Nor would he answer any of our questions "until the appropriate time."

Thus, we sheep were herded into the sales area and told for the first of many times that evening that we would have to act quickly.

Shortly into the presentation, the lights in the trailer faded and went out. Our salesman produced a flash-light and began trying to convince us to spend \$130,000 on

floor plans we could only see in dim flashes of light.

After much self-congratulation by the salesman about the wonders of his company, we were invited to ask questions. However, the first one that was posed (regarding the status of lot registration) elicited a cold "You know better than to ask a question like that."

It seemed like a logical and informed question to me.

The salesman, on the other hand, clearly had no time for questions outside the realm of broadloom colors or cupboard choices.

Cheryl was quiet throughout the presentation and at its end, turned to me.

Without a word, we left the trailer, leaving behind the tail end of yet another declaration by the salesman that time was of the essence for us people lucky enough to be invited into his trailer.

We left shaken, but determined not to be pressured into anything. Even an affordable house, in today's market, is a huge and scary investment.

This was one deal we had to refuse. And we have no regrets.

Sincerely,

Larry O'Connor
Durham-York MPP
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