

Teachers' sick days jump 40%

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Staff Reporter

The number of sick days called in by York Region separate teachers jumped by 40 per cent last year.

During the 1988 school year, 12,830 sick days were taken by York Region Roman Catholic Separate School teachers. This climbed to 18,038 during the 1989-1990 school year.

The total number of days absent for illness and other reasons, including jury duty, adoption leave and funerals, climbed by 53 per cent.

This is a "disturbing trend," Superintendent of Business and Finance John Sabo told trustees at a recent finance committee meeting.

Last year, supply teachers were called to fill in on 11,558 days. Superintendent of Operations Frank Sealy explained replacements are not always called in.

High schools cover absent teachers internally on the first day of a teacher's day away.

And in some instances, the absent teacher's pay is lost for the day away or is deducted from his or her retirement benefits. These leaves include attending a real estate or legal appointment, running in an election and attending a school board of municipal meeting.

"I'm not arguing that the (sick days) are valid, but why are they getting sick?" Markham Trustee Maddalena Smirnakis asked.

She wants staff to look into the reasons behind the substantial jump in teachers' personal illness days.

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Neighbor angry over flooding

An 'ongoing' flooding problem in Musselman Lake has left one Victor Drive resident angry, Council heard recently.

Rick Le Blanc wrote to Council regarding his neighbor's pond which, he claims, "is filled to an overflow level which we have never witnessed at this time of year."

Mr. Le Blanc also said his property is flooded each spring from water overflow, and wants the "magnified" problem solved.

According to Mr. Le Blanc, a second pond on Cameron Amos' property, which acts as an overflow to the first pond, has been filled mostly with soil, which creates flooding on his property.

But Mr. Amos, who attended the meeting, presented officials with letters from Giffels Associates, the Town's consultants, which stated that inspections and improvements to the pond's grading will "benefit the Town by alleviating an existing drainage problem without impacting neighboring properties."

Mr. Amos stated in a letter that he had followed all the specifications Giffel's required and added he still has several tasks to complete.

"Until the grading is complete I will be working on this site from time to time and maintain to protect the environment in the meantime," Mr. Amos said.

Meanwhile, Town Public Works Director Paul Whitehouse told officials "all authorities are aware of what's going on" at the Amos site and suggested monitoring the work through Giffels.

Council referred the matter to staff for a report, which was expected at this Tuesday's meeting.

Muffle noise, Greens told

Sound insulation measures at Green's Restaurant in Stouffville must be undertaken before Stouffville officials will consider exemption from a noise bylaw, town council decided last Tuesday.

It's the latest development in an ongoing dispute between a tenant in the upstairs portion of the Success Square Plaza development and Green's officials, who present live bands on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

David Williams, a resident who lives above Green's, objected last month to a bid from restaurant officials to be exempted from noise restrictions and allow live music.

According to a report prepared by Whitchurch-Stouffville Building Director Bob Bennett, "all parties were in agreement that the noise level was unacceptable," when they met in November to hear a band play live.

As a result, staff said Green's must complete noise insulation measures to protect apartment tenants above the restaurant. When that is completed "staff would recheck the apartments for noise," Mr. Bennett added in his report.

Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Fran Sainsbury said officials at Green's are co-operating with town staff to improve the situation for tenants.

"We'd rather have mediation and negotiation as opposed to confrontation," she said after the meeting.



photos/DAVID BARNETT

Festival of Bells

Stouffville residents gathered to celebrate the annual Festival of Bells last Friday at the Town Square. The event was marked by songs and celebration, as well as the lighting of the Christmas tree. Top photo,

students from Summitview Public School lead a sing-a-long of favorite Yule songs. Below, Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Fran Sainsbury admires the tree with granddaughter Lindsay.



Stouffville aims to save trees

Whitchurch-Stouffville's Tree Committee is taking a strong stand to preserve the town's trees and their maintenance.

The committee, made up of concerned volunteers, has been working with Town staff for two months, and wants to implement a Tree Maintenance Management Policy to ensure protective measures are enforced within the municipality.

Town Chief Administrative Officer Bob Panizza said the thrust of the group will be to "establish a policy, review the tree situation and make recommendations which will be utilized in the existing core of the town and in new and industrial subdivisions."

The mandate will establish a comprehensive policy to govern the maintenance of street trees in the Town with the help of a consultant, a committee report stated.

The committee is asking for Council support and an annual budget to ensure trees are regularly pruned, fertilized, watered and protected against insects.

Some protective measures the committee wants to enforce include preserving existing trees, removal of and replacement of diseased trees and the planting of new trees throughout the

Town.

Mr. Panizza said the project will be a "much larger scope of operation" than just reviewing architectural landscaping.

"This policy expands the role in not only reviewing landscape but the trees in the Town as well and will affect Town decisions," he told officials at a recent meeting.

Mayor Fran Sainsbury said although the Committee would like to set up a public information meeting, the group should not make rash decisions.

"The Tree Committee should sit as a

hearing board and not make decisions the night of the public hearing," the mayor said.

Council can change any final policy recommendations the committee brings forward, said Public Works Director Paul Whitehouse.

The committee would also like to give residents the opportunity to present concerns to the group for review and consideration.

Council supported the Tree Maintenance Management Policy in principle and voted to allow a public information night.

CN crossing repairs coming

Relief is still in sight for motorists crossing the bumpy CN rail line on Main Street in Stouffville.

Council voted last Tuesday to go ahead with temporary repairs at the troublesome crossing once approval from CN is obtained.

Stouffville Council has been waiting for two months to hear from CN officials regarding the crossing, but have been unsuccessful in getting any action.

At that time, Stouffville motorists were to see \$44,000 in repairs - of which 90 per cent of the cost was to be subsidized by the province. But no work has been done.

Consequently, Stouffville Councillor Jim Sanders said the town should do the work now to offer relief for motorists.

"Something has to be done right away," he said.

After brief discussion on the matter, members decided to go ahead with repairs of its own.

"We've got to get in touch with CN and tell them we'll do some temporary work," said Councillor Sanders.

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