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Pool proposal for Stouffville tops \$3.5 million mark

TRACY KIBBLE Staff Reporter

Whitchurch-Stouffville residents would agree to a moderate tax increase to build a \$3.5 million indoor pool and racquet ball facility at the Recreation Complex, a survey shows.

Leisureplan International Inc., a town-hired consulting firm which has been studying the need and feasibility for a recreational public pool since last year, recommended Tuesday that the town build the facility by 1994.

"Timing is a cost savings to the town. If built by 1992 you could save capital dollars," said Leisureplan President John Stevenson.

And although swimming and other aquatic activities are the most popular and desired sport to residents, the four-lane indoor pool and surrounding facilities would lose money each year.

A pool complex would operate at a \$173,000 deficit each year, the consultant said, which would increase to a \$200,000 annual loss by 1994.

"All pool complexes in the area operate at a loss," Stevenson said.

Leisureplan also recommended the 9th Line Recreation Complex as being the best location for servicing, parking and community access to most residents. The location is also ideal because it would be located next to the high school and the new community track, the firm said.

"The principle is to combine and control the facility in one compact location to enable the town to operate an efficient complex," Stevenson said.

It was also recommended construction on the facility begin by 1992 to ensure the costs do not accelerate.

The final report, submitted and discussed to a packed Council chambers, included draft architectural drawings and slides of North York's Aquatic Centre as examples of what the pool could look like.

The 19,200-square-foot facility would include locker rentals, therapeutic pools at either end of a competitive pool, racquet ball courts and would ideally create an "inviting facility with life to it," said Stevenson.

The group said although grants have been available through the Tourism and Recreation Ministry, funding for it is not guaranteed.

"There are grants out there, and you do qualify because the studies have been done. You could qualify for a \$752,000 ministry grant but we can't assure you the grant will be approved," Stevenson said.

He told Council the town should be prepared to pay for the entire project through community fundraising and its capital budget.

About 375 households were surveyed or telephoned during the study, which represents a statistically valid and rounded representative of the town's taxpayers, Stevenson said.

He also told Council that expected population figures by 2011 would rise to about 28,213 in Whitchurch-Stouffville, and the prosperity of the pool would depend largely on that population growth.

Ward 4 Councillor Wayne Emmerson asked if the racquet courts were necessary as part of the project.

Stevenson said the courts were essential to the project because they take little maintenance and are "revenue grabbers."

"This should all be built together as a one-phase service facility. You'll save money in the long run," Stevenson said.

Council did not approve any of the recommendations but agreed to study the report further in the new year.

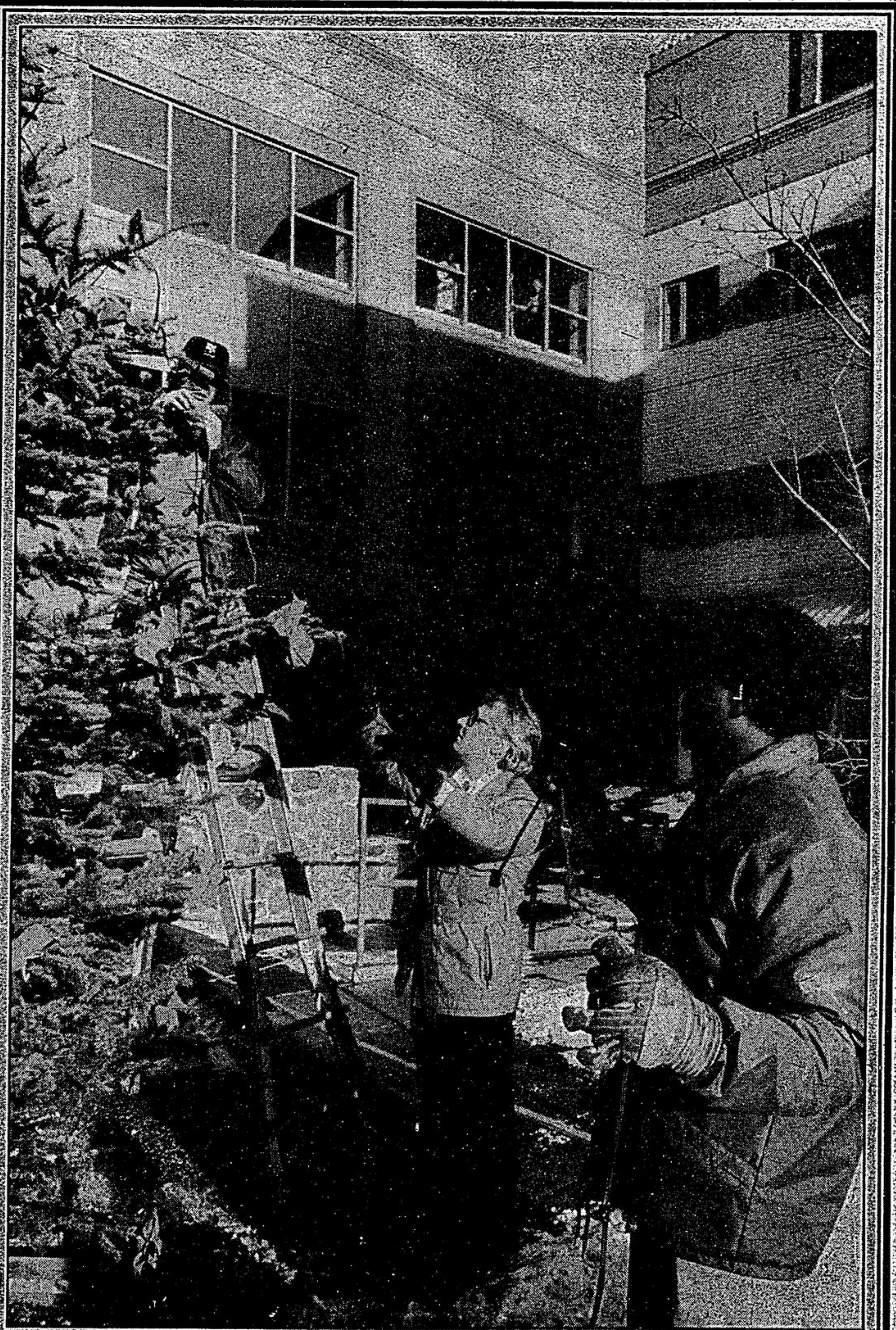


photo SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Tree's company

Markham-Stouffville hospital was brightened this week with the donation of a tree and Christmas lights from two Stouffville area firms. Parklane Nurseries donated a tree and CableTech offered lights to help bring Christ-

mas cheer to the hospital. Here, Fathi Fodolesd (left) and Parklane employee Cal Thicke feed lights to Bruce Rowntree (on ladder) as they decorate the 17-foot Colorado Blue Spruce at the hospital.

A LOOK INSIDE

The Nylons record live album in the area. See page 14.

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Area schools hit with bomb threats

Several schools in the Whitchurch-Stouffville area received bomb threats this week, resulting in classroom evacuations and lesson interruptions.

York Region Board of Education Superintendent Wayne Houston confirmed the threats saying, "It's a typical copycat chain of events. Houston admitted the board had down played the incidents to discourage further events."

None of the threats were carried out. According to unofficial reports, however, Ballantrae Public School, Summitview Public School, and Stouffville

District Secondary School were among the schools told that bombs were located at the facilities.

Orchard Park Public School, meanwhile, was evacuated Monday morning while officials responded to a similar threat.

Other reports show that schools in the Markham area also received bomb threats, resulting in at least one evacuation.

The board has an evacuation policy and principals are taking care of the problem at the schools in question.