

ARE YOUR DIAMONDS SECURE?

Barthau

JEWELLERS

Across from Clock Tower
STOUFFVILLE

Weekender

Auto Express

SAB

REPAIR SPECIALIST

172 BULLOCK DRIVE,
UNIT 31, MARKHAM
471-8660

Prentice withdraws support for arena floor

Ward councillor tables motion to cancel \$28,000 flooring: Home show in limbo

SAL BOMMARITO
Staff Reporter

Plans for the purchase of a \$28,000 arena floor have been temporarily suspended after a town councillor withdrew his support for the project.

The move has also put plans for the spring home show in limbo. The show has been scheduled from April 25 to April 27 at the recreation centre.

Ward 6 councillor Ken Prentice, who has established himself as budget-minded during his short tenure on council, dropped a political bombshell on council by tabling a motion the purchase be cancelled.

Council had already approved the purchase on two separate occasions.

But Prentice, who supported the flooring purchase last month, said his decision was based "on incomplete information" from staff.

Defeated

Prentice's motion was defeated, but not before several heated exchanges involving Prentice, Mayor Fran Sainsbury, chamber president Larry Rogalski, recreation director Marlane McKee-Wetheral and members of the public.

Council did approve a motion by Ward 5 councillor Bob Ancheril to hold a meeting with all interested parties to find a solution to the problem. Prentice abstained from voting on Ancheril's motion.

The floor purchase has been suspended until such a meeting can be arranged.

"As members of council, we're reliant on staff to make decisions. When I made the decision to support the expenditure of money (on the floor), I was advised that a previous council had made the decision. I understood the new council was bound (by the decision)," said Prentice.

Prentice said he later found out staff's advice was incorrect.

"While the municipal act binds us to provide long-term commitments, I believe the arena floor does not fall into

this category," said Prentice.

That distinction may also reflect on other previous council decisions, he added.

Prentice's motion left some councillors and staff stunned and silent.

Prentice had notified Rogalski about his intentions before the meeting. But Rogalski fought to keep his composure while addressing council.

"This puts us in a very awkward position. We've had about 20 inquiries (from vendors) about the home show," he said.

"I held my cool (when Prentice called). I keep thinking this thing is a settled issue. I don't know anymore. We do want a home show. What do we have to do to put one on?"

Marketing kits have already been mailed out by the chamber to vendors interested in coming to the home show, Rogalski added.

The chamber had made inquiries about holding the show at a number of other locations, including the Markham fairgrounds and last year's site, the ReMax Imperial Centre.

But Rogalski said last year's experience "was most difficult. Nobody wants to go through that again. We lost money doing it," he told council.

The chamber was also accused of "scaling down" its financial support for the flooring. The chamber has agreed to pay \$5,000 towards its purchase over a period of five years.

"How would you feel as a businessman? You wouldn't honor the commitment," said Ward 1 councillor Ivanka Bradley.

Political football

Sainsbury said "the floor has become a political football" for the town. The mayor said funding from the floor would come from lot levies, and not from taxes. She said merchants have as much right as other groups to use the recreation centre, especially since many merchants support sports teams in town.

"(The recreation centre) is a public asset. It should be

shared," Sainsbury said.

Rogalski's statement the chamber was prepared to change its show dates to early May surprised McKee-Wetheral.

"The chamber was not prepared to change its dates to early May. I am surprised to hear it," said McKee-Wetheral, who sat shaking her head during the debate.

Following the meeting, she

said a solution to the problem may be difficult since the ice has already been rented from mid-April to mid-May. The Stouffville figure skating club has also booked the arena for its carnival in mid-May, she said.

The ice season was extended by a month by the previous council to increase revenues from the recreation centre. About \$10,000 will be raised

from ice rentals during that period, said McKee-Wetheral.

In opposing Ancheril's motion for a special meeting, Prentice said: "I am not willing to give consent. The feedback from my constituents has been overwhelming. Even if the money (for the flooring) is coming from lot levies, I think a percentage of the mill rate should be attributed to the floor (when the budget is completed)."



Cookie campaign

Members of Stouffville's 2nd Brownie Pack show the cookies they're selling this month. From left: Carolyn Lubbock, Alexandra Izzo, Brown Owl Marina Orlovski and Jordana Izzo sample this year's batch.

Gypsy moth program cancelled

York Region officials and private landowners are stunned by the provincial government's announcement the gypsy moth spraying program will be cancelled for 1992.

Nearly 300 area landowners have already paid \$30,000 for a co-ordinated aerial spraying program organized by the region and subsidized by the province. York Region information officer John Scott said regional council dealt with the item at committee meetings this week.

"It was a shock (to council)," Scott said. "We will return (the applicants') money."

Scott said the region will be entering into discussions with the province regarding a provincial forest health and awareness program instead.

Natural resources minister Bud Wildman announced this week \$3.8-million originally earmarked for the gypsy moth program will now be used for "other higher-priority initiatives in its forestry program."

A release from the MNR states: "A one-year cancellation of the program is not expected to seriously affect the health of the forest over a majority of the area these insects now infest."

But area landowners who witnessed the gypsy moth infestation in forested areas of northern York Region last summer, including Whitchurch-Stouffville, are fuming. They say the money is needed to prevent the destruction of trees and forests by the gypsy moth in their communities.

MARKVILLE LINCOLN HENRY

STOCK TO ORDER YOUR WAY

HWY. 47