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The Tribune *Stouffville*

Vol. 104 No. 15 A Metroland Community Newspaper Wednesday, April 15, 1992 28 Pages 50 cents

Conflict Act invades financial privacy: Town

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

Local officials don't want the province to know their personal financial status, it was decided last week. Whitchurch-Stouffville Council is backing the

Town of Aurora's bid to eliminate a section of the province's Conflict of Interest Act that requests financial information about local politicians.

The issue was raised by York Regional officials several weeks

ago in Newmarket during a visit by Municipal Affairs Minister David Cooke.

Cooke had told officials that the questionnaire, which requests information about local politicians' and their familys'

assets, liabilities, financial interests, sources of income, cash on hand and pension rights will help "re-establish honesty in politics and faith in democracy."

But many towns are uncomfortable about revealing such personal information. Regional Councillor Fred Cox had told Cooke that asking this detailed information would "discourage good people from running" in local politics. Cox also told Cooke that it shouldn't be important to the province if local politicians are "rich or poor." And Whitchurch-Stouffville officials said last week that they will back Aurora's bid to boycott the section of the act which requires answering financial information. Ward 3 councillor Nick Tatone told officials that no other organization requires detailed personal data on the

people they hire. Tatone suggested, instead, there be a "test" people should pass before running for politics to ensure they understand the basic fundamentals of the system. "Maybe there should be a prerequisite before running and then be given a stamp of approval," Tatone said.

Cooke had also told regional officials the conflict of interest amendments which now require this information will force politicians to "clean up their acts."

He said while most people become involved for community betterment, there are a few who run for politics to line their pockets.

"Something has to be done to gain the voters' confidence back in the political process," Cooke said. Local officials voted to support Aurora's resolution which calls for cancellation of the section asking for financial data.



WSF now serving 1,300 children

Nearly 50 per cent of the residents that line up at Whitchurch-Stouffville Foodbank (WSF) are children, council was told last week.

WSF co-ordinator Robyn Magee told officials that 48 per cent of the 2,719 people needing the local service are children, and added this is a high percentage.

Magee said about 40 per cent of most other York Region foodbank clients are children and that Stouffville must "get behind" the WSF to ensure kids aren't going to school hungry.

Magee said the WSF has spent nearly \$25,000 buying food since it opened its door January,

1991 in the basement of the Churchill Baptist Church.

She told council that WSF clients come from "all kinds of categories," and the sagging economy is making it impossible for people to find work.

"Everyone here knows someone who uses the WSF - it's not just for people on welfare."

She added that many clients, who had lived "pay cheque to pay cheque" have recently lost \$70,000-a-year jobs and are forced to turn to the foodbank.

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Youth Centre

Results coming in from questionnaire

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

The results of a survey of all town youth is being tabulated this week to gauge the need for a youth centre in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

The survey was the end result of a *Tribune*-sponsored forum in December of last year.

The questionnaire was circulated by the town's Recreation Dept. and program co-ordinator Peter Arnott said early results indicate a "very strong support and interest from youths in this community for a youth centre."

The surveys were presented to all intermediate and senior grade youths attending schools in the Whitchurch-Stouffville area to ensure results would reflect the needs and wishes of the younger population and not simply what adults would like to see.

Arnott said results from Ballantrae, Whitchurch-Highlands, Orchard Park, Summitview Public Schools, St. Mark's Catholic School and SDSS are being tabulated and combined before a final report will be presented.

Survey questions included where youths would like to see the centre located, suggestions for hours of operation, which programs should be available, whether memberships are a good idea and whether the centre should be operated year round.

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