

Group gets nod, no funds for mobility transit

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

Taxpayers likely can't afford to fund a bus service for Whitchurch-Stouffville's disabled citizens, members of the Mobility Transit Committee were told this week.

The seven-member volunteer group, which has already raised nearly \$4,000, wants the town to chip in another \$8,000 in order to qualify for a \$15,000 provincial grant.

But Mayor Fran Sainsbury said the town doesn't want to give residents "a false sense of security" until after the 1993 budget deliberations.

The mayor suggested issuing a card to local disabled residents who qualify

so they can at least ride mobility buses while visiting or working in another municipality offering the service.

Ward 6 councillor Ken Prentice said the town has to "be honest" with groups upfront regarding funding.

"We shouldn't set up expectations too soon - this is an increased level of service," Prentice said.

But Ward 1 councillor Ivanka Bradley, also a member of the committee, told officials it's time disabled residents got a chunk of public money.

"The town has to recognize this segment of society that has not been recognized yet," Bradley said.

Figures show the local service would cost about \$30,000 a year to operate for

an estimated 2,200 trips within the town's boundaries.

Committee chairman Marg Britton told council the group is concerned about providing transportation to the town's 80-plus disabled residents.

York does not yet have a region-wide system, but would take over responsibility for municipal programs already in place. This would transfer the operating costs to the region probably within a few years, Britton said.

"York Region would take over any existing transits to avoid duplication of service," confirmed Tom Parry, town engineering co-ordinator and liaison with the committee.

So far, Markham, Vaughan, Rich-

mond Hill, Aurora, Newmarket, and Georgina provide a service for disabled residents.

The following committee recommendations were approved:

— committee eligibility criteria be adopted;

— committee application forms be approved;

— council consider financing half the costs in the 1993 budget review process.

The Mobility Transit Committee is hosting an open house at Parkview Village from 2-4 p.m. tomorrow where the winner of its logo design contest will be announced.

Everyone is invited.



Photo/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

What a card

A Unicef table was set up in the library this week. Here, Anne Pare helps Anne Wallis select greeting cards from the display on Wednesday.

Airplane trip to Disney lifts spirit of recovering local boy

For a seven-year-old boy, a day trip to Florida's Disney World proved to be one of the most exciting adventures of his life.

Whitchurch-Stouffville resident Bobby Shaw, 7, was flown by Air Canada with 77 other disabled children earlier this

month to take in the many sights and sounds of the famous theme park.

Bobby was part of The Sunshine Foundation's 16th Dreamlift to Disney program which strives to generate funds for the ongoing fulfillment of children's dreams.

The group's goal is to eventually reach every Canadian child between the ages of three and 19, who suffers a life-threatening, terminal illness or a severe physical disability.

This year's \$75,000 adventure began at 7 a.m. Wed., Nov. 4, where Bobby, the other children and a medical team boarded a 727 jet headed for Florida.

The group landed at about 9:45 a.m. and was met by members of the US Navy, who helped the children on and off the plane, and escorted and assisted the group on rides throughout the day. Bobby's sister, Melanie Provis, told *The Tribune* last week.

"Bobby, who was paralyzed from the waist down as a result of a car crash in July which killed his mom and sister, had never been on a plane before," Provis said.

"He absolutely enjoyed himself and he especially liked the live shows, Pirates of the Caribbean and It's a Small World," Provis added.

Bobby spends his weeks at a Toronto rehabilitation facility for therapy and to attend school, and comes home on the weekends to be with his sister and two nieces.

Taping council meetings ejected by local officials

Council will no longer tape record its meetings because of staff overtime and high operating costs, it was decided recently.

Local officials voted to scrap its month-old bylaw after it was found the practice was causing staff to work long hours.

But Ward 6 councillor Ken Prentice, who initiated the plan, said the tapes act as a "double check" for accuracy in recording of the town's official minutes.

"The tapes were kept to protect us from inconsistency and acted as a safeguard 'I have a real problem,'" repealing the bylaw, Prentice said.

But Ward 5 councillor Bob Ancheril said the tapes cost taxpayers unnecessary expense, and insisted the taping process was an added service that can't be expected in tough economic times.

"If we are concerned about saving money we should do it in all areas - not just the ones that suit us," Ancheril said.

And Mayor Fran Sainsbury said York Region tapes its meetings, and that only one tape in 15 years was requested at a "big expense."

"This is a new level of service that is causing staff overtime," Sainsbury said. "The tapes just become garbage," she added.

Town's aging truck will "cost someone" someday, victim says

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The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville must uphold essential services or face liability charges, an audience heard this week.

Mayor Fran Sainsbury told about 100 members of a ratepayers' group - Save Our Stouffville (SOS) - that the town must uphold health and safety standards or risk being sued.

SOS members crowded chambers Tuesday night and ordered the town to stop spending money unnecessarily in a recession.

The group is vehemently opposed to the town's proposal to purchase a custom-made fire truck worth more than half a million dollars.

SOS spokesman Marion Wells said taxpayers will refuse to pay any tax increase next year for purchases "we can't afford."

But Sainsbury said firefighters, under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, can refuse to operate a defective machine.

She said the town's fire truck is two decades old, has broken down three times on the way to emergency calls and costs taxpayers thousands each year in up-keep and repairs.

"The public expects these services - we are in the business of service," Sainsbury said.

Wells said SOS is not opposed to the department getting new equipment - the town has \$250,000 already saved for this.

The group is opposed, however, to an extravagant purchase which will burden taxpayers' children for years to come. Wells added Stouffville resident Peter Ober stood up to praise the Whitchurch-Stouffville Volunteer Fire Department, which he said "deserves" to be named "the best" department in York Region.

Ober's home was completely destroyed by fire last March and it was "just by the grace of God" that the fire chief showed up in time to save his family.

Obers said the town's aging fire truck ran for 12 hours straight and while he observed the men at work, realized its inefficiencies. He said the 20-year-old vehicle is "highly lacking" and suggested from his own experience, that the town needs a new truck. He said an aerial truck would have doused flames far more effectively during the fire - which trapped his family upstairs - because it allows the water to be sprayed at hard-to-get-at areas of a burning home.

"(The old truck) is going to cost somebody something one day. You may not need (fire service) today, but when you need it, you need it," Obers said.

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