

ST Sainsbury unhappy with York's Vision 2021 plan for the future

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smaller areas to protect green space.

The Vision document, she maintains, leaves smaller municipalities holding the funding bag to preserve lands, while larger towns rake in the industrial tax dollars. Sainsbury said a section in the 24-page Vision report regarding preservation of York's environment fails to make funding commitments to help preserve land.

"It's all well and good to preserve and conserve this and protect that, but where is the money going to come from? Who is going to pay?"

The mayor wants the region to set up a compensation package or a "fair and equitable" tax distribution system

to help smaller municipalities deal with development freezes through extensive environmental protection measures. York's Vision document, which will be incorporated into its first-ever Official Plan this fall, describes an overall shape and direction for York Region over the next 30 years.

"The Vision will serve as a blueprint for determining the level and type of services to be provided and the conditions governing new development in the region," the report, prepared by Brian Strom of Intersol Consulting Associates Limited, states.

York Region proved this week that it already fails to fork over its share of funding for environmental projects

after refusing to help pay for a phosphorus reduction study at Musselman Lake, Sainsbury pointed out. "This is stagnation without compensation. Ninety per cent of my municipality is affected by this book," Sainsbury said.

Despite the mayor's request that a compensation package be set up to provide for funding of preservation, officials failed to support her bid.

Several regional councillors argue the document is merely a guideline to provide the way of life residents have requested.

"Anything we would do would obviously have to be within the bounds of our financial capabilities," Markham councillor Carole Bell said.

Regional councillors call for safeguards from welfare abuse

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

York Region must protect itself against people who intentionally quit good-paying jobs to collect from the already overburdened welfare system, said one regional politician last week.

Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti said during a meeting in Newmarket last week that he didn't want a slew of York Region residents following the lead of a Metro-area woman who publicly announced her intentions to quit a \$41,500-a-year government job to collect welfare.

"Under what circumstances can a person quit a quality job and go on welfare?" Scarpitti asked.

Scarpitti called for sweeping changes to the current system to prevent able-bodied workers from quitting jobs to collect from taxpayers.

"I don't agree with any policies that force people to quit, but we have to stop incidents like this," Scarpitti said.

The councillor was referring to a Metro Toronto Housing Authority employee who quit her \$41,500-a-year post, claiming she can make nearly as much on welfare and be home to care for her two children.

Helle Hulgaard, a single mother, said she nets \$1,993 from her job and can bring home \$1,973 collecting welfare.

Her public statement caused

a city-wide, public furor, however, as Metro residents lit up government switchboards to voice their disgust in Hulgaard's decision.

Welfare workers later said she miscalculated the amount she would receive, stating it would amount to just over half of what she nets from working.

Scarpitti asked if there is some way York Regional staff can turn down or screen applicants that quit jobs to collect social assistance - calling it a misuse of a system designed for those who are unable to find

work. But community services commissioner, Peter Crichton said single mothers make up a large portion of welfare collectors in the region and there really isn't much he can do to prevent it.

But Crichton said there are "implications" that are considered with each case.

"Well I know of some single parents who stay home and earn much less than \$41,000 a year and get along fine," Scarpitti said.

Crichton will prepare a report.

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