



Walls come tumbling down

Derrick operator Otavio Cuttillo of Adesso Construction, tears down the walls of the old Dr. Freely home on Main St. to make way for a new development, including a new TD Bank office.

Photo/MIKE RUTA

Business sign bylaw relaxed

By MIKE RUTA
Staff Reporter

Council has relaxed the sign bylaw in response to businesses who said the previous rules were too restrictive. And the Business Improvement Area now has control over signage in the downtown core.

"We went through the sign bylaw from A to Z," said building director Bob Bennett, referring to the summer meetings between town staff and representatives from the BIA, Chamber of Commerce and others.

Sandwich-board, or A-frame, signs are now permitted in commercial zones, one per business, if the owner gives permission.

Inflatable signs are also in the amended bylaw. A business can now advertise with an inflatable sign twice a year, again if the owner gives permission. Bennett said there would be

a \$100 fee for such advertising, since town staff would have to ensure that any floating sign is positioned and anchored properly.

The size allowance for two-sided ground signs has been increased, depending on the area in which they are placed, to allow businesses and others to better advertise.

But the BIA was a big winner in the process. Bennett said the BIA now has the authority to issue permits and charge a fee for signs, hang banners across the road and allow A-frame signs on the sidewalks in the BIA area.

BIA member Sandra Stronach, owner of Freckles at 6345 Main St., welcomed the greater control afforded by the changes in the bylaw. She said the BIA would ensure that any changes they make are appropriate.

"They can control their own destiny," said Bennett, "that's what they want. I don't think the town can do anything more for them."

York students score well on tests

(From page 1)

and regional stats on provincial math and English test results.)

Trustee Keith Irish said he believes a more traditional way of testing that provides a concrete marking system would be more useful. "I don't find this all that useful," he said of the preliminary report Monday.

But board staff insists that this is just one of many tests that, when looked at together,

will provide an overall picture of how York Region students are doing compared with national, provincial and local standards.

Results released last week by the North York Board of Education showed Grade 3 and 5 students there performed below the national norm on the CAT reading test.

North York's public affairs officer Ross Parry said trustees voted to release the data before the Nov. 14 munic-

ipal election. "If we'd brought this down in November, we would have had credibility problems," Parry said.

As for releasing a ranking of schools, Parry said the North York board "had a very long debate" and decided to make this information public next year.

He said the board will also compile the results of all testing according to race as well as the length of time a student has been in Canada.

Candidates drop out of races

There are two changes to the list of candidates running in the municipal elections.

Courtney Newmarch, late Friday, opted to withdraw

from the ward six race, leaving Lynda Norman, Helene Johnson and Mark Kostandoff in the hunt. Also out is Ivan Davis, who was registered to

run for the position of English language trustee for the separate school board. Paul Wolscht and Sean Pearce are left vying for the seat.

Meet your candidates in coming weeks

The candidates will be under scrutiny in two upcoming debates. The Chamber of Commerce is hosting a debate for the four mayoralty candidates only, on Monday at 6:30 p.m. at Angie's Eatery. Only members are asked to attend.

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library wel-

comes everyone to a debate on Nov. 4 at 7:30 p.m. at Stouffville District Secondary School. Public and separate school board candidates can be interviewed after the debate.

Nov. 5, the Vandorf Ratepayers will be hosting a mayor's debate at the Vandorf Hall at 7:30 p.m.

Correction

The lead story in the Oct. 18 edition of *The Tribune* contained an error.

The town did not scrap OPA 88, as stated in the story. In fact, the Ontario Municipal Board approved the amendment in a verbal decision given on Oct. 13. At the Oct. 11 council meeting the

town cancelled plans for a secondary plan for the Vandorf/Preston Lake area.

The OMB would not approve additional industrial development applications beyond the limits of OPA 88. The item did not appear in the council agenda. *The Tribune* regrets the error.

Opinion

Centre was hamstrung

(From page 1)

brought up to code. Months later, a report to council by the building department indicated the facility would need some work, including a wheelchair access ramp, but otherwise met the requirements necessary for a youth centre.

Rather than drawing on the Parks trust fund to complete the necessary tasks, the present council stonewalled the operation by saying the cost of the operation was not in the budget, then being made ready for final approval. The total amount of the renovations would have come in at around \$10,000. There just wasn't the money at that time, council said.

When budgets were being drawn up this year, there was absolutely no mention of a youth centre, despite having been committed to by council.

Since then, council has chosen to ignore this issue. The *Tribune* learned that this summer, council had no trouble finding more than \$8,000 to fix up the front of 19 Civic Ave. because a woman tripped on the cobblestones. Then after a service club donated new basketball nets to the town, council approved the withdrawal of more than \$6,000 to pave a basketball court rather than have people shooting hoops in a parking lot. And finally, earlier this month, this newspaper was further surprised to learn that the Chief Administrative Officer, Merlin Dewing, was hoping to convert the basement of the Silver Jubilee Club into a recreation centre for town staff, using their own money and equipment.

What happened to the youth centre?

Town staff determined that the Silver Jubilee is no longer suitable for a youth centre, because:

1) Seniors use the upstairs.

Does this mean that seniors are incapable of being in the same building with young people? Or does it mean the seniors who use the town-owned building complained about the idea of teenagers invading their space?

2) The municipal archives are "one door away" in the basement.

Does the town not have other storage space? Perhaps the upstairs lounge at the Rec Centre could serve as an archive. It is rarely used for much else. Does the town not have a lock on this door?

3) The basement has bad access, making it a hazard in the case of an emergency. Also, the barred windows do not make for "a friendly environment."

The town knows perfectly well that the \$10,000 would eliminate all unsuitable and dangerous aspects of the building. As far as the environment is concerned, an unfriendly one is better than none at all.

Senior town staff has instructed the recreation department to rethink the idea of a youth centre, its location and its budget.

This is intolerable. The budget has been worked out, a suitable location found, and the demand has been demonstrated. The youth centre would have cost \$21,000 a year to run, including rental of a Main St. store at \$1,100 per month. However, through programs, video game receipts and membership drives, the centre could easily be one of the few municipal facilities that actually make money. Projected revenues even for the first year would see several thousand dollars in profit.

Council's mandate following the initial approval was to strike a committee which would oversee the centre's operation. This has not been done. Why?

Because there is no will on this council. The first of the two councillors that objected to the youth centre and rejected the motion did so because they felt there was enough for young people to do in this town. The second said the centre had "financial implications."

The others have put off the notion because they didn't want to spend the money to renovate, they didn't want to upset the seniors who use the Silver Jubilee, and because, let's face it, young people don't have a voice.

It is election time once again. There is still no centre for young people in this town. The connection is obvious, this should be made a prime election issue.

Current candidates must realize that in the last three years, three classes of teenagers have turned 18. They now have a voice.

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