

# Tough non-smoking bylaw needs municipal support

**MIKE ADLER**  
Staff Reporter

An anti-smoking bylaw for York Region should be passed only if all nine municipal councils first give their permission, regional chair Eldred King suggested this week.

York Regional Council may decide next week to ask its local councils for special power to pass a tough law which would ban smoking immediately from food courts, restrict it in other places, and make the entire region smoke-free on Jan. 1, 2000.

Provincial law requires only that a majority of the councils — five — pass their authority to regulate smoking to the region.

King said he knows that, but regional staff

have recommended getting consent from all nine councils. "It requires all of them," he said. "I don't think we want a bylaw that some municipalities are not in favor of."

A health department worker spearheading the project, Cathy Jaynes, said she was unaware the consent of each municipality was needed. Local councils won't vote on the bylaw, just on transferring their power to make one, she stressed yesterday.

Such a bylaw would replace the different rules for non-smoking sections in various communities. Stouffville puts aside 70 per cent of restaurant seats for non-smokers; Markham reserves half, and Richmond Hill 20 per cent.

King admitted Richmond Hill has already expressed its opposition to a regional bylaw.

"It remains to be seen what they will do when asked directly," he added. "It's open for debate and it may require some refinement."

King, who retires in November, said he supports the proposed bylaw as a step "society would wish us to take."

Residents and businesses may be split on the issue. When 400 residents were polled last April, 65 per cent said they'd support making all enclosed public places in the region smoke-free; when 1,500 surveys were sent to businesses, 78 per cent of the 2 per cent which replied opposed this measure, the region said.

The bylaw would include a six-month "education period" after it is passed, Jaynes said. After that, the region proposes that warnings and then tickets with a \$115 fine be given out.

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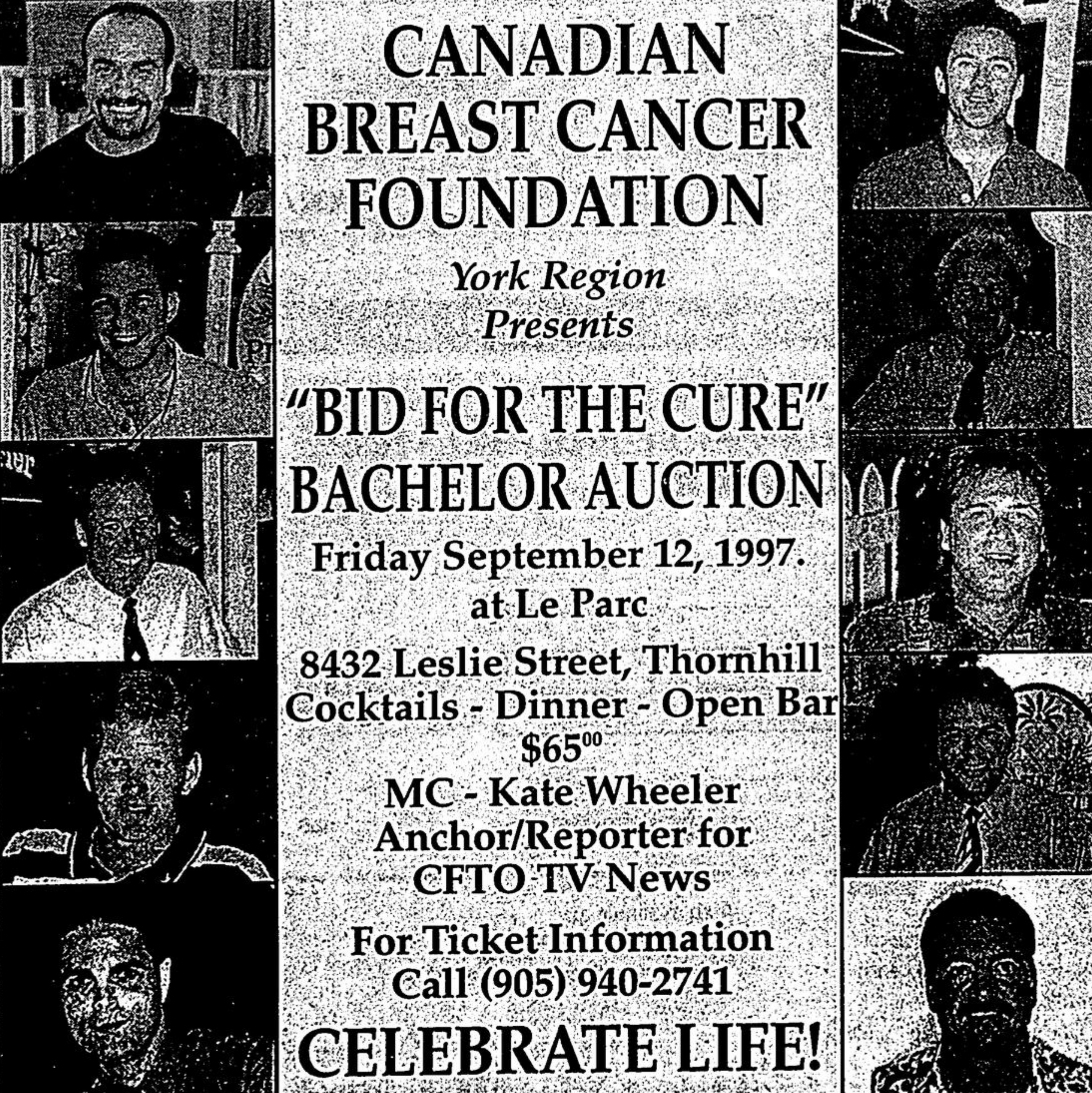
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