

# Enviro group 'stunned' after suggestion it be abolished

JOAN RANSBERRY  
Staff Reporter

A move to dump the town's environmental committee has sparked controversy.

On Monday, Whichurch-Stouffville council will be asked to back a staff recommendation to abolish the seven-member committee which includes a scientist, an arborist, a waste management specialist and an environmental engineer.

Reaction from committee members ranges from stunned to disappointed while some councillors are questioning the rationale of abolishing a committee that's linked to the environment.



SHERBAN

The timing's off, suggests Ward 6 Councillor Sue Sherban. "The environment is a key issue on a global basis. Why would we get rid of our environmental group?" she said.

Since the environmentally-sensitive Oak Ridges Moraine factors into Whichurch-Stouffville, citizen participation should be welcomed, said committee member Don Chubbuck.

"I'm very disappointed," said Chubbuck, who is an environmental specialist with Ontario Hydro. As well, his colleague Al Metauro strongly opposes disbanding the committee.

"We've a small community. We're a town that needs input from its citizens," said Metauro, who owns a waste management business.

Metauro also questions the role of the town in relationship to the committee which was struck three years ago.

"Council never put anything into this committee," said Metauro.

"We sat there and wondered why. We weren't utilized when we could have been. We're professionals who are interested in the environment," he said.

An environmental committee can be in place in town but "not be part of council," said Whichurch-Stouffville Mayor Wayne Emmer-son.

"It can carry on but not be a committee of council. A group can form on its own. They could come and advise us on environmental matters," said Emmer-son.

Ward 2 Councillor Mark Carroll said staff was concerned because the committee wanted to get involved in planning matters.

"That has nothing to do with the environment," said Emmer-son.

"The committee wanted to take on administrative duties and tell me how to do my job."

The committee "stepped on a few toes," said Carroll.

"It didn't have a specific mandate. It needs one. If it knew what it was suppose to do maybe it wouldn't run hither and yon."

The fate of the committee was discussed during council's orientation session on Tuesday, said Ward 1 Councillor Steve Pliakes.

"We discussed it," said Pliakes. "We were told the committee did-

n't have any teeth in it. Maybe all it needs is some teeth."

The environment is the most important issue facing us all, stressed Pliakes.

"We're tinkering with our grandchildren's future. We were given a pretty good planet. Let's make sure we pass it on," he said.

While Ward 3 Councillor Peter Dobrich has yet to decide how he'll deal with the matter, he, too, questions whether the committee had a "clear mandate" from council.

"We were told it wasn't working. But maybe it didn't have mandate," said Dobrich.

There are "pros and cons" to disbanding the committee, said Ward 4 Councillor Cliff Dunkeld. "I'll have to take a good look at this," he said.

Committee member and former councillor Mike Watson said he was "disgusted at how under utilized" the committee was. The committee ended up doing its own projects, said Watson.

Committee projects included lake testing programs for Clark Lake, Simeon Lake, Preston Lake and Musselman's Lake, initiating

mapping of areas within the town, reviewing the waste management programs and recycling programs, holding Earth Day

celebrations included tree planting at schools, giving away tree saplings to the public and getting green space articles published in newspapers.

"The total cost of these projects to the town was under \$150," said Watson.

He added, "Is it smart to get rid of people who care about preserving our lakes, trees, wetlands and other areas of environmental concern?"

Committee member and former councillor Ivanka Bradley wonders how abolishing a citizens group will affect volunteerism in town.

"These people gave of their own time. They came forward because they care. This strikes a blow to the environment and to volunteerism," said Bradley.



DUNKELD

## Fisch to form task forces

■ From page 1 ■

found challenges in the Region of York's history," including a threat of imposed amalgamation by Queen's Park, downloading of provincial services and pooling of property taxes in the 905 regions to help pay for Toronto's social services.

But Fisch warned councillors not to make any amalgamation decisions based on fear the province will impose its own solution.

He also urged councillors to wait until all the facts and figures are available before making a decision.

"We should not make a decision on gut instinct," he said. "Until we have some of these questions answered, I see little merit in going down that road."

Fisch intends to establish a number of regional task forces to study streamlining regional and local services such as transit.

Acknowledging some councillors' anxiety that Markham will now have six representatives at the region, including York's top politician, Fisch promised to be a completely fair and impartial chairperson.

"I have that ability. I have that track record and that is the pledge I make to you."

# Taxpayers 'got money's worth' with Harry Bowes: Hogarth

The York Region Board of Education faded out this week with trays of food and cake and equally rich praise for trustees and staff.

But it was Stouffville's Harry Bowes who got the loudest applause — a standing ovation and a shower of compliments for his 22 dedicated years at the board.

Bowes always brought his sense of public duty and good humour to the job, giving the board a "human face," said board chair Bill Crothers. As chair for six years, the Stouffville trustee maintained both strong leadership and his compassion, he added.

"All of us have been privileged to learn from you and work with you," the Markham trustee told Bowes, noting he intends to stay a member of at least one school council in town.

"It's been an interesting and exciting experience," Bowes said at a reception later.

He held a giant get-well card, sent and signed by board staff after Bowes had heart surgery several years ago, saying he'd treasure it all his life.

He thanked his family and the parents

of the region, later adding that getting parents more involved in Stouffville schools was one of the things he enjoyed most as trustee.

Although Bowes was the longest-serving, a total of 12 trustees who served a total of 97 years retired Tuesday night.

In January, six veterans and six new trustees will hold the inaugural meeting of a new district school board for York Region. It will be governed by different rules; technically, it will be a different board, though it serves the same area.

At the meeting, education director Bill Hogarth lauded the current trustees for sticking to a policy of fiscal restraint and displaying courage in difficult times. The position of future school trustees has been "devalued," in Ontario, but that's no reflection on the current board, he said.

"You challenged us to do a better job," Hogarth said on behalf of board staff.

"I can look every taxpayer in the eye and say that they got their money's worth."

~ Mike Adler



Harry Bowes shows off his personalized farewell card from YRBE staff with public relations spokesperson Ellen Chenaux Monday during a board party.

Photo by MIKE ADLER

## WE'RE FIRST IN DISTRIBUTION

We've delivered 49,038,152 flyers door-to-door, so far this year.

For further information on how we can deliver your flyers call:

Ruth or Melissa at 640-2100

The *Stouffville* Tribune

Watch for these Flyers on Saturday, December 13, 1997

WALMART  
LOBLAWS / SUPERCENTRE  
SEARS - SEARS CHRISTMAS\*  
THE BAY - STOCK-UP\*  
BIWAY\*  
PETSMART\*

A & P\*  
ZELLERS\*  
WESTON PRODUCE\*  
MOORES THE SUIT PEOPLE\*  
M & M MEATS\*  
IGA - STOUFFVILLE\*

DOMINION\*  
SOBEY'S\*  
LOBLAWS - YONGE & BERNARD\*  
CANADIAN TIRE - RICHMOND HILL\*

\*Selected areas only