TOWN AFFAIRS: *Fundraising committee hopes to raise $600,000 for library expansion*

Huge fundraising plan under way

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
STAFF WRITER

A 12-year-old bag piper introduced one of the largest fundraising campaigns in Whitchurch-Stouffville's history.

On Tuesday, piper Cameron McKenzie of Stouffville escorted the library expansion campaign team into council chambers where its members outlined the fund raising strategy.

Team members, wearing hard hats and Building Our Future T-shirts, told council they intend to raise $600,000 to go towards a $2-million library expansion.

Over the next two years, the 25-member campaign will go door-to-door, to the small businesses and corporate communities and service clubs. A major library membership drive and a book sale are also part of the plan.

"Up until now, our library has been flying in the wind," campaign chairperson Helene Johnson said. "Now is the time to stop the talking and get on with the job."

Library board president Jan Williams said the library's goal is to provide a multimedia collection, programs and an information resource centre which will allow citizens equal opportunity to stimulate and satisfy their individual leisure, learning, cultural, intellectual and educational needs.

Team member Wendy Wright, a Stouffville District Secondary School student, told council a library "provides a valuable source of research material for school projects."

The downtown library has long been close to author Howard Stuart's heart. Prior to getting the first of six books published, Stuart read to children at the Stouffville library.

"The importance of this initiative cannot be overstated," Stuart said.

To show the team means business, Johnson announced it already has $7,500 in the bank. And, to emphasize corporate support, Johnson read the names of the project's corporate honorary advisors. They include Coca Cola, Canadian Tire, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Cesaroni Technology Inc. and Novapharm Ltd. Also endorsing the campaign are the Whitchurch-Stouffville Historical Society, Buckingham Manor, and author Howard Stuart.

"Libraries enrich the lives of all citizens by providing information and leisure for individual lifelong learning as well as being a major resource for business, industry and community groups," A.G. Eamers, president of Coca Cola, wrote in his endorsement letter.

U.S. now has best roads, council told

Vivian, McCowan roads, and Victoria, Albert and Charles streets earmarked for repairs

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scheme. "It's excellent. Where else can you get one dollar for 30 cents?" he said.

Program money is used for roads, sewers, bridges and buildings, and Whitehouse already knows where he'd invest any cash coming to Stouffville.

Whitehouse said he'd recommend pavement work on Vivian Road from Hwy. 48 to Regional Road 30, McCowan Road at Bloomington to Vandorf Sideroad, Warden from St. John Road to Vivian Road. As well, the money could be used for reconstruction of Rupert Avenue, west of the Ninth Line.

"And, there's reconstruction work needed in town on Victoria, Albert and Charles streets. It goes on and on."

While Whitehouse waits to see what will happen next spring. He's busy working with this year's $750,000 local roads budget.

Canada-wide, the five-year federal-provincial-municipal cost-sharing program has generated investments exceeding $8 billion, with federal contributions over $2 billion. As well, the program has created over 125,000 short-term and 10,000 long-term jobs, Wilfert stated to Martin in a recent letter.

So far, the Canada-Ontario Infrastructure program has invested about $1.2 million in Whitchurch-Stouffville — just over $1 million went to road rehabilitation projects, about $174,000 was used to improve part of Rupert Avenue, about $75,000 helped replace a culvert on Bethesda Sideroad, and $28,500 was spent on sidewalk construction.

Stephen Damp, chairperson of the Ontario Road Builders' Association, is visiting municipal councils across York Region, asking them to lobby the federal government for more road repair cash. Damp addressed Whitchurch-Stouffville council Tuesday.

"Roads have a huge effect on our quality of life," Damp said.

Canada no longer holds a good reputation for excellent roads. "When it comes to quality in roads, including the absence of pot holes, the United States now surpasses us," Damp said.

Nationwide, there's "a $40-billion infrastructure deficit in Canada," Wilfert said. "The issue of watermains, sewers and bridges, core infrastructure, needs to be addressed."

"As a taxpayer I don't care who does it. Just get it done."

Not one mayor in this country has spoken against the Canada Infrastructure Works, Wilfert added. "And, I've not found one municipality that can't afford it. This is very important to the municipalities — I've talked to Wayne (Emmerson), I've talked to the finance minister and I know the prime minister's take on it."

PLEASE HELP THE LESS FORTUNATE

PHOTO/MARK HARRIS

Stouffville Rotary Club members Sandra Stronach, left, and Judy Kennedy make a plea for Stouffville Foodbank donations during October as the club's community service project. More than 50 families with more than 80 children in the Stouffville area will benefit.

Work still needed, says union

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hammering out details in an effort to put together a package teachers could live with.

The session ended when the provincially appointed mediator had to catch a plane at 7 a.m. Thursday morning.

The union then asked for 24 hours to review the proposal. Board officials agreed to a 5 p.m. deadline Thursday and that's when the negotiator for the union informed the board it wasn't good enough.

Benedict said there was still more work to be done. "What we've been discussing here is what the board put forward — it's a package, but it is not complete in any way," she said.

Barker would not provide details, but said the union's request to return to the table this time means talks will have to start from "square one" and indicated it would create serious setbacks in the talks.

Teachers want restoration of 160 minutes of preparation time per week and a contract that guarantees their salaries will not be attacked by the board in the future.

The board has countered that it can no longer afford the teachers' salaries under the new provincial funding formula, when the average York Region teacher earns about $3,000 more than his or her colleagues in the rest of Ontario.

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