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THE REGION: Health is the priority, not finances, committee members say

Public welcome to meetings: politicians

FROM PAGE 1

ing decisions in private that will have such a significant impact on local businesses.

But Vaughan Councillor Joyce Frustaglio said that while chambers focus on the financial impact of a smoking ban, the committee is concerned about protecting the health of York Region residents.

"I can tell you our concern is one of health," said Frustaglio, who chairs both the no-smoking committee and the region's health and social services com-

mittee. "Our prime concern is the health and safety of our residents."

While agreeing communication about the committee was flawed, Frustaglio stressed the meetings have always been open to the public.

Other councillors agreed. Newmarket Councillor Diane Humeniuk said dates and locations of all municipal meetings, including the no-smoking committees, are televised on Rogers Cable.

Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Wayne Emmerson suggested it wasn't necessary to notify businesses yet

because the committee has been focusing on making all municipally owned facilities smoke-free.

"I did attend a few of these meetings. I did not believe it was behind closed doors. Anyone could have attended," he said.

"We had to show businesses all municipal buildings were smoke-free. Then we could go back to businesses and say, 'We've done ours, where do we go from here?'"

Georgina Mayor Rob Grossi said protecting residents' health must remain the committee's primary concern.

"Health has got to be the top priority, and everything else has to go from there."

Grossi is also upset about suggestions the committee has been operating in secret.

"It sounds like this was some subversive group meeting in smoke-filled basements," he said.

"It sounds like we were meeting in a vault," Frustaglio added.

But when Burkholder asked that business representatives be allowed to sit on the committee, Frustaglio said committee members will have to decide if they want to change the membership.

In the meantime, she said business owners are welcome to attend meetings and voice their concerns.

But regional chairperson Bill Fisch said it's only fair to have opposing viewpoints represented on the committee.

"I think they (businesses) need to be at the table to outline their views. Whether you like them or not, they still need to outline their views."

Fisch also said the committee should be formalized to deflect some of the criticism that has been unfairly directed at you (Frustaglio) and the committee.



BILL FISCH
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Cultural centre hosts open house

Visitors to Market Village Shopping Centre can watch a Lion Dance and taste a mooncake tomorrow as Markham's Chinese Cultural Centre holds its open house.

The event is an annual one arranged by the centre to thank the community for its support.

The centre's instructors and students will perform Chinese opera, fan dancing, Tai Chi and other acts in the mall food court, following a Lion Dance at 2:30 p.m. and greetings from Chinese officials and Markham politicians.

During the open house, from 2 to 4 p.m., all are welcome to view brush paintings, cartoons and other crafts by the students of the centre, which is on the mall's second floor.

Different kinds of mooncake—a traditional food for the Festival of the August Moon next weekend—will be sampled.



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