

Stouffville Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
37 Sandiford Dr., Suite 306, Stouffville, Ont., L4A 7X5

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EDITORIAL

Inappropriate to revisit old, rejected water plans

York Region residents who don't want to drink Lake Ontario water should not be celebrating the region's decision last week to revisit its water supply strategy.

Barring the lake running dry, that's where the water will be coming from.

Three years ago, after much study and consultation, York Region decided its best long-term water strategy would be to build a \$911-million water pipe through neighbouring Durham Region. With York's population booming, the region needed an effective way to provide new communities with water.

Under the plan, water would be collected from the lake between the Pickering nuclear power station and a Toronto sewage treatment plant and would supply Markham, Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Aurora and Newmarket.

York and Durham are still talking. And what holds true three years ago holds true now.

The plan was cost-effective, the water quality was acceptable and residents would see a reduction in their water bills.

So why is the long-term water team considering abandoning the plan?

Three years ago, York considered piping water through Peel Region. At the time, Peel didn't think it needed to increase its water supply and that would have left York bearing the brunt of the cost of a new pipe.

But Peel now needs a new water infrastructure and it's estimated that York could save between \$50 million and \$65 million if Peel were its partner, rather than Durham.

In addition, York and Peel already have a sewage agreement, which could act as a legal framework for a water supply agreement.

It's great that the region would look at the most cost-effective options for residents.

It's reassuring to know that regional officials will re-examine a decision if it becomes apparent there may be better solutions available.

But it certainly isn't an appropriate time to start revisiting old, rejected suggestions that did not meet the region's requirements three years ago, such as building a pipe to Georgian Bay at a cost of \$1.2 billion.

If the move to a partnership with Peel Region becomes reality, York still has the same end result: a dependable water supply from Lake Ontario delivered in a cost-effective way.

OPINION

MAKE YOUR OWN GRINCH!



Every Christmas season, editorial cartoonists from Victoria to St. John's gleefully rip-off Dr. Seuss' famous character as a symbol for greed, evil and corruption.

This year, create your OWN Grinch by cutting out the face of the politician, corporate bigwig or spoiled millionaire athlete of your choice and sticking it in the appropriate space! It could be Paul Martin, for continuing to tax us silly... Mike Harris, for the hospital emergency room crisis... or the head of the WTO for putting profits over human rights... the list is endless! It's fun! It's easy! And it won't change a darn thing!

NEWS 99 APOLIGES TO DR. SEUSS

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Dave Teetzel

MPP back in the tuna can with police remarks

Dave Tsubouchi had a pretty good streak running. But for York Region residents — particularly police officers — the Markham MPP's recent remarks on police hirings will seem at least as outrageous as his suggestions about dented tuna tins.

His assertion that municipalities should hire officers without help from his government will be a subject for considerable debate, but it's not unreasonable given that the province has already increased its funding for new officers by some \$70 million since it took office.

But my eyebrows did the high jump when I read his assertion that, back when he was a municipal councillor, he took care of the police department.

For the record, Tsubouchi was a ward councillor and, therefore, had no direct vote on York Regional Police issues. But since he wants to attach his tenure as a councillor to police funding, here goes.

Tsubouchi was on Markham council from 1988 to 1995. By the end of that period, York Regional Police:

- Had the lowest police-per-person ratio in the Greater Toronto Area, with one officer for every 802 residents;
- Had the lowest per capita spending on police in the GTA, about \$100 per resident;
- Had no spousal abuse or sexual assault units;
- Didn't even provide cell phones or pagers for most of its hostage negotiators and detectives;
- According to a 1994 police union survey, 44 per cent of officers said morale was low or very low, due primarily to a staffing crisis.

York Region began addressing its policing problems after Tsubouchi moved on, although it did so with a lot of help from his provincial government.

This year, York Region hired 77 new cops. However, 33 of those cops were needed just to maintain the current ratio of officers to residents, which remains the worst in the GTA. Our per capita spending on policing is still the lowest in southern Ontario.

In 1997, York hired 17 new officers and 12 civilians. It needed to hire 60 cops, but couldn't get them because the Ontario Police College (run by, you guessed it, the province) didn't have enough instructors and, therefore, didn't have enough graduates to meet the needs of all the province's police forces.

Earlier this year, Chief Julian Fantino warned councillors the police budget will increase at least 14 per cent over the next five years to more than \$88 million.

In short, our police bills are going to skyrocket even without improving service.

Without continued provincial support, York Region may slip back into the pattern of the late '80s and early '90s.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Trempes' legitimate lawsuit nothing to do with money

Re: *Lawsuit over dog bite death won't bring Courtney back*, Nov. 30.

In response to Laurie Vanzeeland's letter of Nov. 30 regarding the death of Courtney Trempe, I would like to point out to her that the lawsuit being brought by the Trempes has nothing to do with money.

The Trempes fully realize nothing is going to bring Courtney back — their hope is that this horrible tragedy does not happen to another family.

I feel they have a legitimate lawsuit against the police for not investigating the case the way they should have and the owner of the dog who knowingly allowed a dog with a history of aggressive behaviour to remain in a community where inevitably it would come in contact with other people.

Until people who harbour aggressive dogs are sent the message that they are responsible for harm done by their dogs, we will continue to have dogs in our communities that are a danger to others and should not be there.

I resent Vanzeeland's description of the Trempes' lawsuit as a vendetta.

It is a normal and acceptable action in our society to sue the parties we feel were negligent and caused such pain and suffering.

I feel that the Trempes are doing the right thing — it is the only way the message is going to reach people who keep vicious dogs in our communities: you are responsible.

EVELYN TOBIAS
MARKHAM

Theft of senior's adult tricycle an unforgivable act

Right off the top, let me make it clear that this is not a "poor little me" letter.

That said, who was the meanie who artfully stole my bike from outside the front door of my seniors apartment building? And why?

Since this over-70 lady riding her adult tricycle is such a well-known sight in Stouffville and everyone knows the tricycle belongs to me, I doubt the few dollars it would bring would be worth taking a chance on.

Even though my poky old bike would be of no practical use to the thieves, pinching it probably served momentarily as an amusing way of getting their kicks.

If I only rode my bike for fun, I would be quite willing to part with it to someone who needed it more than I do, but as it happens, I am that needy person.

This is not a bid for sympathy — you can skip the sobbing violins — but in the aftermath of a life-threatening physical disorder, coupled with osteoporosis, I have difficulty walking. Thankfully, even without my bike, I still have a lot rosier prospects than when I was first hit by these afflictions.

Oh, yes, I'll survive the loss of my adult tricycle, but my emotional reaction to how I lost it is an entirely different matter.

All I want to do now is to let whoever committed the offence know that, to me, it was no insignificant misdemeanor. It was a heartless act and, being so, was unforgivable.

MARGARET STAPLEY
STOUFFVILLE

LETTERS: POLICY

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Write: Letters to the Editor, 37 Sandiford Dr., Suite 306, Stouffville, Ont. L4A 7X5. Email: letters@stoufftrib.com

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Canadian Circulations Audit Board Member



Ontario Press Council

Canadian Publications Mail Product Sales Agreement #1403419
Subscription rates by mail: 1 year - \$69.55 (Tuesdays only)

Stouffville Tribune, published every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, is one of the Metroland Printing, Publishing and Distributing Ltd. group of newspapers, which includes the Ajax/Pickering News Advertiser, Alton Herald/Courier, Barrie Advance, Barry's Bay This Week, Bolton Enterprise, Brampton Guardian, Burlington Shopping News, Burlington Post, City Parent, Collingwood/Wasaga Connection, East York Mirror, Erin Advocate/Country Routes, Exton/Exton Guardian, Flamborough Post, Georgetown Independent/Action Free Press, Kingston This Week, Lindsay This Week, Midland/Penetanguishene Mirror, Milton Canadian Champion, Milton Shopping News, Mississauga News, Newmarket Aurora, Georgina Era-Banner, Northumberland News, North York Mirror, Oakville Beaver, Oakville Shopping News, Orillia Today, Oshawa/Whitby/Clarington/Port Perry This Week, Peterborough This Week, Richmond Hill/Thornhill/Vaughan Liberal, Scarborough Mirror, Stouffville Tribune, Today's Seniors, Uxbridge Tribune and City of York Guardian.

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