

# Smoking issue pits residents against business

BY LISA QUEEN  
Staff Writer

The health of residents was pitted against the interests of business owners at the first public meeting to debate York Region's no-smoking bylaw.

"To smoke or not to smoke, that is the question; whether smokers—now in the minority—be allowed to bombard us with their extremely dangerous second-hand smoke. The answer has to be a resounding no," Dorothy Lienau, vice-chairperson of the

Newmarket Heights Community Association, said at the meeting in Newmarket's council chambers Tuesday night.

"We need the most stringent laws in place to protect the innocent. Ban all smoking in all public places. To say that smoke can be contained in a certain area is absolute hogwash. It stays in the very air we breathe. It cannot be filtered out—it has to be stopped."

Lienau complained smokers are costing the health-care system millions of dollars a year—bills that all taxpayers have to bear.

"Not only do smokers have a complete disregard for other people's comfort and health, but when they become sick from this addictive habit, the taxpayer is then expected to foot their health bill," she said.

"So not only are we subjected to serious health risks due to second-hand smoke, we then have to pay for their treatment for diseases they bring upon themselves. Is it any wonder hospitals are pushed to the limit? (It's) a case of people taking poison and demanding an antidote at others' expense. We have had enough of their selfish, arrogant and irresponsible behaviour."

About two dozen people turned out for the meeting, with most pushing for what would amount to a region-wide ban passed by York's nine municipalities.

The region's no-smoking task force chairperson, Vaughan Councillor Joyce Frustaglio, speculated the small turnout means there is little opposition to prohibiting smoking in all public places, such as restaurants, bars, bingo halls, bowling alleys, workplaces, shopping centres and municipal facilities.

"I'm disappointed by the turnout. (But) maybe the small numbers of people here is indicative that we're doing a great job," she said, adding that because she has had two bouts with cancer, getting

a smoking ban is a personal crusade.

"For me, it's a real, real personal issue. My disease was not related to smoking, but I'm not taking any chances. My life is too important to me."

But Lisa Marsden, manager of government relations for the Restaurant, Hotel and Motel Association, said businesses could be devastated by a smoking ban.

There are 2,400 hospitality establishments across Ontario, 63 per cent of which are independently owned.

"We're not talking about Tim Horton's and we're not talking about McDonald's; 63 per cent are owned by mom and pop owners," she said, adding their profit margins are between 2 and 5 per cent.

Marsden said the smoking ban that went in to effect New Year's Day in the Region of Waterloo has had a huge impact on the bottom line of many businesses.

Business owners are reporting an average decrease in sales of 15.9 per cent, while the average business has cut employee hours by 31 hours a week.

"The very staff this bylaw was meant to protect are feeling threatened," she added.

Marsden urged the task force to investigate new technology that she claims enables ventilation systems to completely clean smoke out of the air.

The device allows smokers to light up in areas where non-smokers are congregating without affecting their health.

Rusty Parr, hall manager of Bingo Country, said a total ban would decimate bingo halls, which would also jeopardize revenue that goes to community charities.

Saying 75 per cent of his customers are smokers, he urged the task force to allow bingo halls to set aside 40 per cent of their floor space for patrons who want to smoke.

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### Highway 407 East Partial Extension

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), acting as the Responsible Authority (RA) under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) is engaged in a screening level Environmental Assessment (EA) as required under Section 20(1) of CEAA for the above noted project.

The 407 East Partial Extension involves:

- the construction of a 15.9 km 4-lane (ultimate 10 lane) toll highway from the Highway 407 Centre terminus (Highway 48) in the west to its terminus at Highway 7 east of Brougham in the Region of Durham

Construction of the Highway 407 East Partial Extension can be commenced once the requirements of the federal EA have been completed.

Public consultation is a significant component of the Highway 407 East Partial Extension CEAA review. As part of DFO's federal environmental assessment under CEAA, it is within the Minister's discretion to invoke CEAA subsection 18(3) — Where the Responsible Authority (RA) is of the opinion that public participation in the screening of the project is appropriate in the circumstances, the RA shall give the public notice and an opportunity to examine and make comment on the screening report. The CEAA screening report prepared by the RA (in this instance DFO) will be available for public comment at the following locations:

Markham Community Library 6031 Highway 7 Markham, Ontario L3P 3A7	Pickering Public Library Whitevale Branch 475 Whitevale Road Pickering, Ontario L0H 1M0	Reg. Municipality of Durham P.O. Box 623 605 Rossland Rd. E. Whitby, Ontario
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The Screening Report will be available for the comment period: February 9, 2000 - March 10, 2000. All comments must be received prior to March 11, 2000.

Accompanying documentation produced through the provincial EA process will also be available at the above locations.

If you would like to receive further information or provide written comments on the CEAA screening report, please contact:

Referrals Co-ordinator  
Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
Fish Habitat Management - Ontario Area  
867 Lakeshore Road  
P.O. Box 5050  
Burlington, Ontario  
L7R 4A6  
Tel: (905) 336-4595  
Fax: (905) 336-6285

## Newmarket fraud artist uncovered

BY RICK VANDERLINDE  
Staff Writer

A fraud artist who stole tens of thousands of dollars from Newmarket taxpayers set up phoney construction companies to cash town cheques, Mayor Tom Taylor said.

"This involved someone being able to fabricate companies that, in fact, did not exist," Taylor said. "These were construction-type companies (supposedly) related to various projects in the town."

The scheme involved numerous "small" cheques cashed over an extended period.

Taylor said the sophisticated scheme, now under investigation by York Regional Police, unravelled when an employee questioned an invoice last month.

Taylor said the employee wanted to know if the invoice was for work done this year or in 1999.

"A person went to get an explanation from that department," Taylor said. "The explanation was not forthcoming, so they started an investigation."

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