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Mayor says hearing can be averted

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process, the town received eight bids on the project.

"We'd also like to expand it to include a fitness centre," said Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Wayne Emmerson.

The mayor is confident that a full hearing will be averted. "I think we can outline our position and do it well," he said.

A full scale OMB hearing will cost Whitchurch-Stouffville taxpayers about \$250,000, Emmerson stressed. "Lawyers are expensive," he said.

As well, Residents Information Group, the group opposing the project, can expect to spend about \$100,000.

In his appeal, Sword maintains that the town must build a traffic bypass before it builds the complex.



WAYNE EMMERSON: Mayor says town would like to expand project to include fitness centre.

A bypass is planned for the area, said Councillor Sue Sherban, but it will not be built until growth takes place. A 1,900-home subdivision, slated

for land south of Memorial Park, is planned. But the houses will not go in until the York-Durham sewer system, known as the Big Pipe, makes its way to Stouffville.

"That could take two or three years," said Sherban.

The residents want an indoor pool and a large library and they want them now, Emmerson said.

The OMB appeal is not necessary, said Sherban.

Existing roads, including a just-built access road, will take care of the traffic needs associated with the new facility, said Sherban.

The proposed complex is not an OMB issue at all, said Emmerson.

"It is a local issue," said Emmerson. "It has nothing to do with the OMB and it has nothing to do with the (York) region."

Conservation groups force province's hand

Conservation groups and the City of Toronto are attempting to prod the provincial government into action on the Oak Ridges Moraine by using a provincial law.

But the challenges they presented yesterday, under Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights Act, may be worth only the publicity they generate.

The act lets any two Ontario residents apply to the province's environmental commissioner if they think new policy or legisla-

tion is needed to protect the environment.

Commissioner Gordon Miller is bound to pass such requests to a minister, most likely Tony Clement, whose municipal affairs portfolio is responsible for the moraine.

The act then requires some sort of response, but Clement has stated several times that existing policy for the moraine is working fine.

"What we're doing here is upping the ante," Linda Pim,

spokesperson for the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, said yesterday.

Executive directors of the FON and Save The Oak Ridges Moraine signed one of the EBR applications.

Toronto Councillors John Adams and David Miller signed the other.

The city and groups are suggesting the province produce a land-use plan, approve a policy statement or pass legislation to protect the moraine.

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