

'Extending Millard St.' would ease school traffic jams

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Writer

A move to slap parking restrictions on a section of Elm Road near two Stouffville schools has prompted a call for the extension of Millard Street.

While Whitchurch-Stouffville council passed a no-parking bylaw for the Elm Road area between Ninth Line and Glad Park Avenue on Tuesday night, a longer-term solution to the traffic congestion problem was also discussed.

Members of council, including Mayor Wayne Emmerson questioned whether extending Millard Street from the Ninth

Line west to Glad Park Avenue would be the best way to address the area's traffic problems, which include vehicles being illegally parked.

A Millard Street extension would cost "hundreds of thousands of dollars," public works director Paul Whitehouse warned. However, the mayor stressed that there might be a way to spare taxpayers the entire cost.

If the Ninth Line property located directly west of Millard Street were to be built up, the developer could be required to help pay for the road extension, Emmerson stated.

In the past week, staff met with representatives of the York Housing Corporation to discuss parking and traffic concerns of residents living in a nearby 51-unit apartment complex.

Martin Silver, a manager with the region's Housing and Residential Services Division, assured council that he'd cooperate to persuade tenants to stop on-street parking. At present, there are more cars than there are parking spots at the apartment building, Silver pointed out.

According to Ward 4 councillor Cliff Dunkeld, traffic leading to St. Mark Catholic School and Glad Park Public School is increasing as time goes on. "Millard Street should be put through. Something must be done," he said.

Whitehouse reported this section of Elm Road has become heavily traveled during the time before and after school. "When the new school on (east) Millard Street is opened, perhaps the transfer of some students to that facility may reduce the congestion on Elm Road and Glad Park Ave.," Whitehouse said. As well, during the winter months, the maintenance of Elm Road becomes difficult due to the parked cars, Whitehouse added.

Illegally parked cars are ticketed in Whitchurch-Stouffville. Local bylaw officer Keith Saunders said violating the town's three-hour parking laws carries a \$20 fine, which is reduced to \$15 if paid within five days. Meanwhile, a \$25 ticket is handed out for illegal overnight parking. Quite a number of cars have been ticketed in the Elm Road area, said Saunders. None, however, have been towed away.

Council could get new look

From page 1.

As well, a councillor's annual \$1,361 car allowance would be increased to \$1,500.

Under the plan, Emmerson's salary would increase from \$23,806 to \$26,500. A 10-per cent salary increase would bring the mayor's travel allowance to \$5,000 from the current \$4,361.

In addition to his municipal salary, Emmerson earns \$35,000 a year as a member of York Regional Council. If the 10-per cent municipal pay hike wins approval, Emmerson's total political earnings will climb to \$66,500 a-year.

In making the pitch for the salary hike, Emmerson reminded local council that there's plenty of work ahead. "Considering the time you'll spend over the next two or three years, you'll earn your money," said Emmerson.

A municipal politician in Whitchurch-Stouffville earns \$5.58 an hour, Ward 3 councillor Peter Dobrich reported.

Newly elected Ward 6 councillor Harry Bowes thanked the mayor for telling him how much he earns. "This shocks me. I didn't know until now how much I made," said Bowes. Municipal politics isn't supposed to be about money, Bowes added. "We don't serve for the salary. We do it for the community," he said.



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