

Push on for traffic lights

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Writer

The Vivian Road-Warden Avenue intersection will get either traffic lights or four-way stop signs as well as a lower speed limit, if Whitchurch-Stouffville council has its way.

Despite York Region traffic authorities insisting there's no need for changes at the intersection, town council Tuesday night backed Ward 1 Councillor Steve Pliakes in his crusade to put safety measures in place following an accident at the intersection Sept. 13 that claimed the life of a 29-year old man.

As well, Mayor Wayne Emmerson told council he would push council's resolution at York Region's committee and council level. Emmerson said the issue would be discussed at the region in November.

Pliakes continued his heartfelt plea after James Rennicks of Mount Albert died in a head-on collision with a dump truck. The accident occurred in front of Pliakes' home in northwest Whitchurch-Stouffville.

"I wish I could bring him in here limping from his injuries," Pliakes told the meeting. "But I can't. He's gone, so I'll speak for the dead."

Brian Harris, York Region's director of roads, said a traffic study was carried out at Vivian Road and Warden Avenue in mid-January. According to the criteria used, "traffic lights are not warranted," there, Harris stressed.

Pliakes is challenging the timing of the survey. January is not the best time to carry out a test, he said. "People drive slower in the winter, fearing they'll slip and slide," he said.

For the past few years, residents of northern Whitchurch-Stouffville pointed to safety concerns at intersections and suggested the speed limit should be lowered or that traffic or flashing lights

be put in at Warden Avenue and Vivian Road, Aurora Road and the Ninth Line and McCowan and Aurora roads.

"There's been too many accidents in the past 25 years," said Pliakes.

"Something has to be done. This cannot go on. I'll keep squawking and bitching until something is done."

Whitchurch-Stouffville public works director Paul Whitehouse said the town appealed to York Region two years ago and asked that action be taken regarding the intersections. "I don't think anything was determined," said Whitehouse.

However, Whitehouse is not convinced traffic lights and stop signs are the answer. "That accident could have happened anywhere," he said. Instead, Whitehouse suggested "more police enforcement" is needed.

Ward 6 Councillor Sue Sherban rejected Whitehouse's suggestion. How many deaths do we have to have to warrant action?, she asked. "If you can stop one death by putting in a traffic light then so be it."

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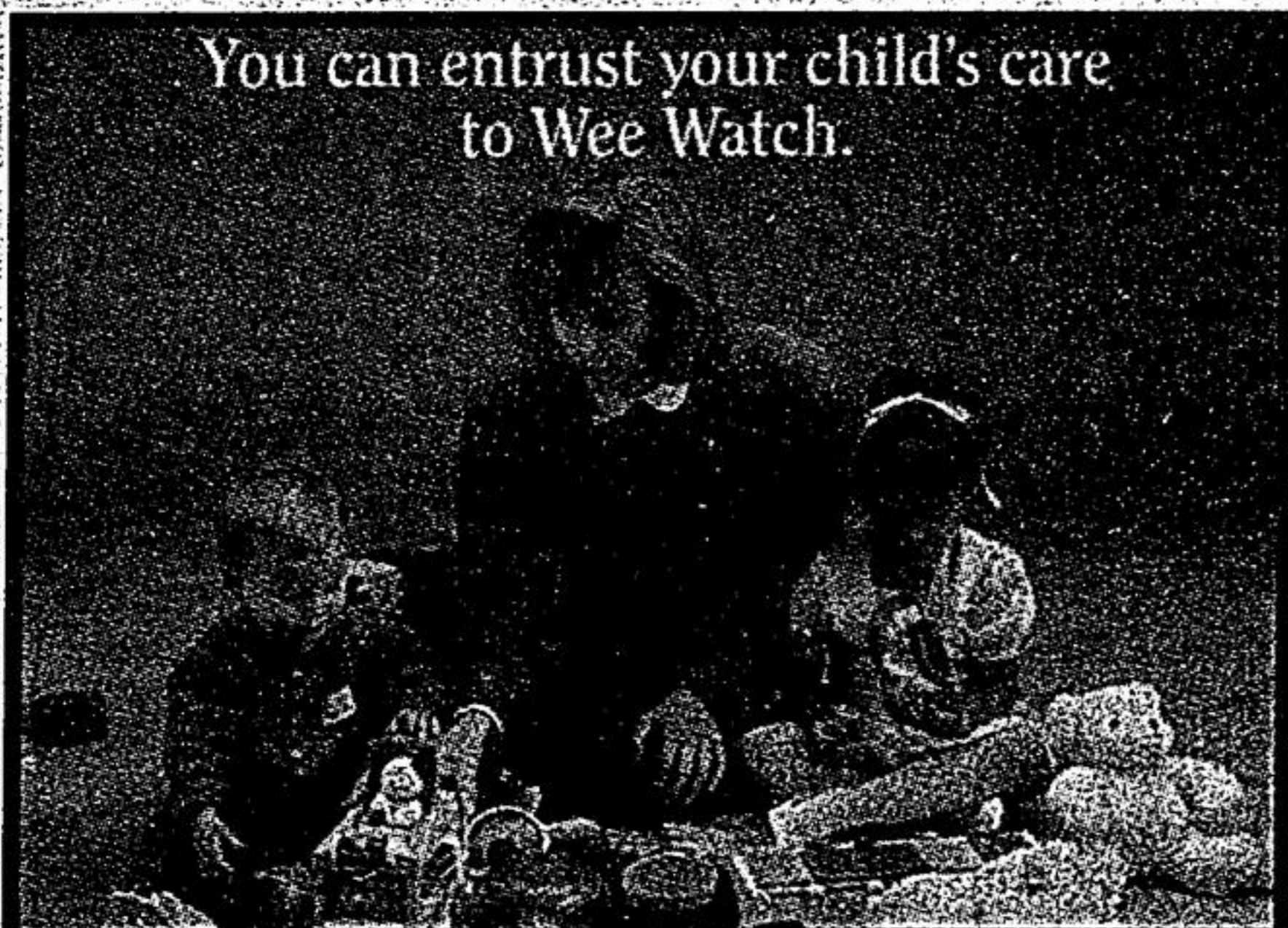
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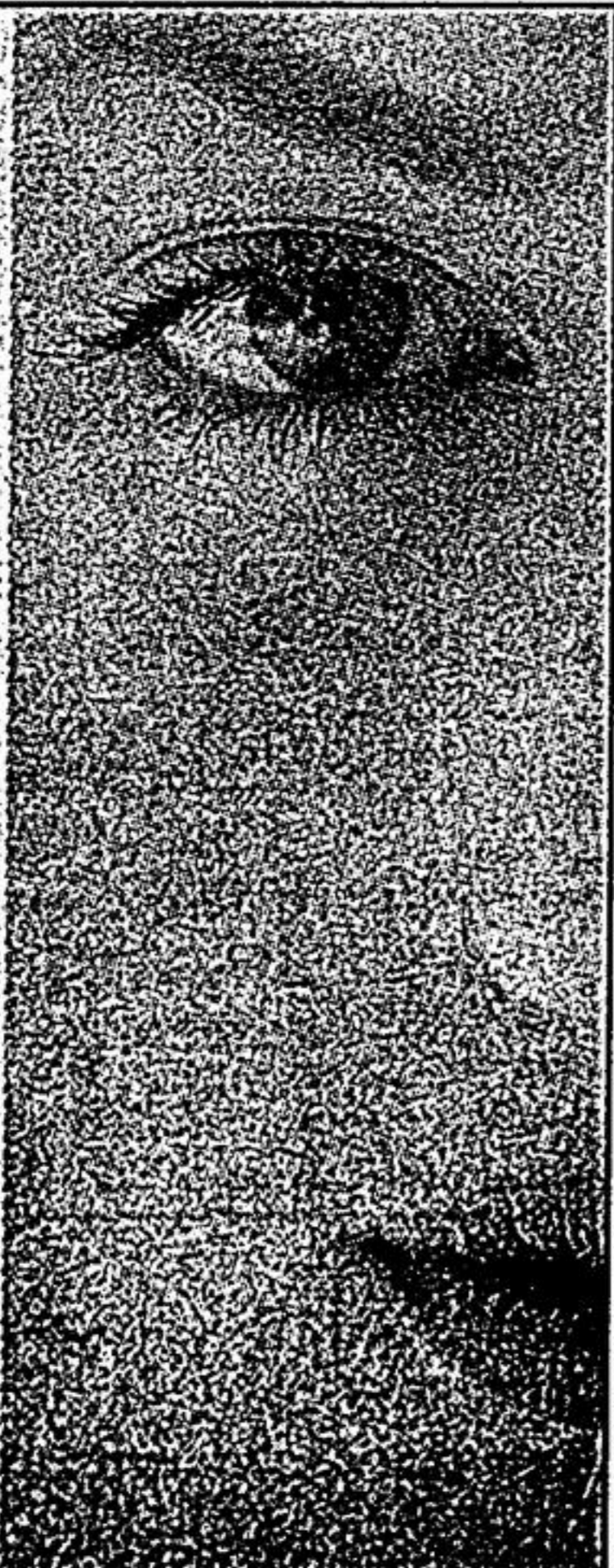
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