

Smart growth panel music to region's ears

Group's broad scope includes transit, garbage issues

BY JEFF MITCHELL
Staff Writer

York Region is encouraged by a provincial initiative to promote well-managed growth.

Chairperson Bill Fisch is York's representative on the new smart growth panel, which will provide the province with input on traffic gridlock, urban sprawl and waste disposal issues throughout southern Ontario.

The panel is comprised of 19 representatives from communities as diverse as Niagara Falls in the west to the GTA and north to Haliburton.

It is that wide geographic scope that led Markham Regional Councillor Bill O'Donnell, chairperson of the town's economic development committee, to wonder about the effectiveness of the new panel.

"What does cottage country have to do with someone who lives at Yonge (Street) and Steeles (Avenue)?" he asked.

Mr. O'Donnell predicted the majority of growth issues discussed by the panel would be urban, which may lead to alienation among members representing areas beyond the 905 belt.

"I think it's going to be GTA-focused and some of the representatives at the table are going to say, 'What the hell am I doing here?'" he said.

But it is diversity that may help the panel be effective, Mr.



BILL O'DONNELL: Markham Regional Councillor believes most smart growth issues will be urban.

Fisch said.

"We're really trying to focus on the high-level issues and not necessarily the specifics of a geographic area," he said.

"I think that's what the province was trying to accomplish with this wide range of people around the table," he said.

'We're really trying to focus on high-level issues and not necessarily the specifics of a geographic area.'

The smart growth panel, which includes politicians, developers, business people and environmentalists, will be headed by Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion.

Its mandate will be to advise the province on how to manage growth in a 37,000-square-kilometre area.

Seeking solutions on issues such as transportation and waste disposal will be at the top of the panel's discussion list.

The province's pursuit of smart growth is music to the ears of York Region planning commissioner Bryan Tuckey, a passionate advocate of sensible, sustainable community planning.

York Region has launched its own growth management initiatives and Mr. Tuckey and his staff are working with planners from other GTA regions on smart growth issues.

He is hopeful local views can be passed along to the panel, which will, in turn, make recommendations to the province.

"The panel is remarkable in scope, actually," Mr. Tuckey said.

"It means you can take pieces of the smaller picture to form the bigger picture and vice-versa.

"We will be able to provide lots of advice to this group."

Mr. Tuckey contends many sound and sensible planning practices and official plans are in place in Ontario; he sees the current exercise as a means of coordinating efforts and developing more initiatives that are compatible and complementary.

"We're finding we can work together well on a variety of levels, on different issues," he said.

"It's housing, it's transit, it's urban structure; it all begins with that," Mr. Tuckey said.

"It's the building of a community."

Police find phony \$10 bills on man, at Markham home

BY ROGER VARLEY
Staff Writer

York Regional Police have uncovered a quantity of counterfeit \$10 bills at a Markham house.

Det. Kerry Vincent said Wednesday they found \$1,000 in phony bills when they arrested a man, and another \$2,500 at his home.

"We haven't had a lot of counterfeit 10s," Det. Vincent said. "But a lot of merchants won't take \$50 and \$100 bills any more so the natural progression is to phony 20s and 10s."

He said the quality of the counterfeits was "amateurish" but added it would not be hard to pass them in a dark bar or taxi or in a busy store.

He said people can recognize the phony bills with a little bit of study.

"You can tell the difference between bank note paper and bond paper," he said. "Genuine bills look crisp. The 'Flanders fields' poem is easily read. On the counterfeits, it's harder to read."

Det. Vincent said the original arrest came as a result of surveillance of a known drug-dealing area.

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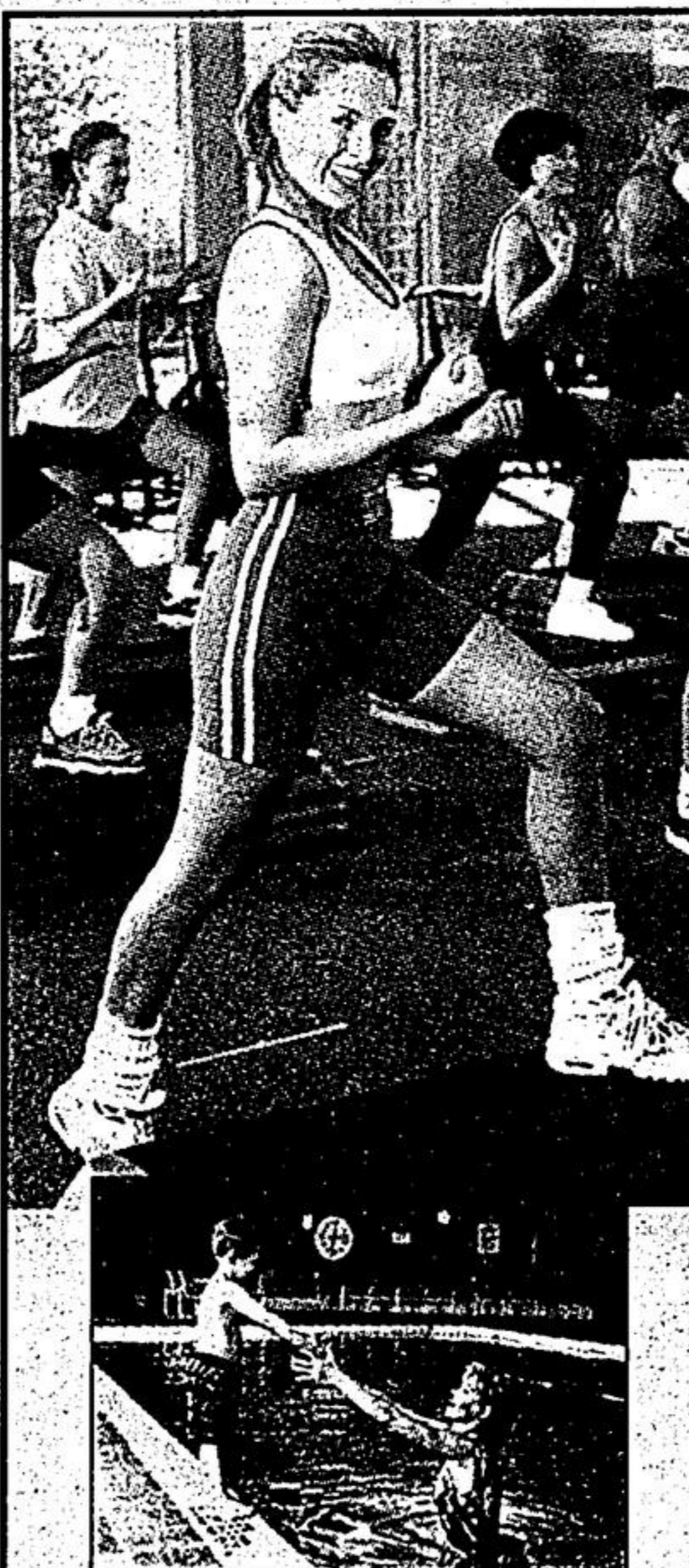
Sponsored by Rouge Valley Mennonite Church,
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Topics include:

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"Getting Help For People Who Are Depressed",
and

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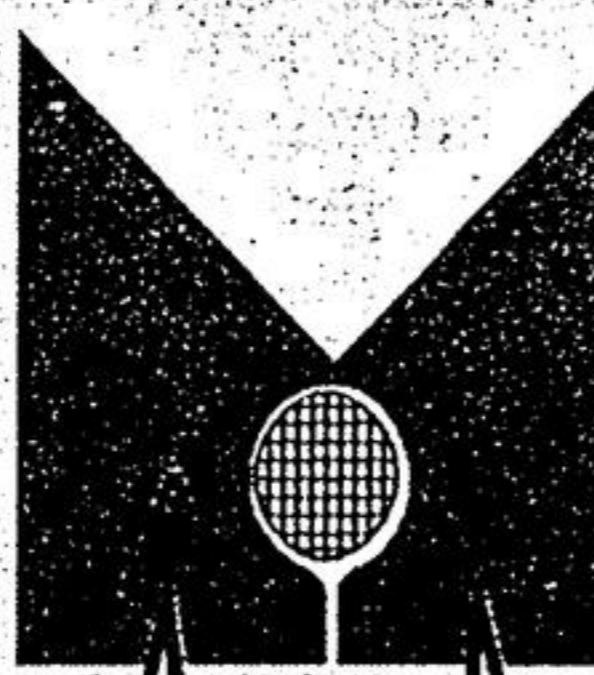


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