

Resident wants town pesticide-free

BY LISA MEHAK
and
JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Writer

The first step towards Whitchurch-Stouffville becoming a pesticide-free community was taken at Tuesday's council meeting.

After a pitch by environmental activist Brenda Lobraico, council agreed to support the environmental advisory committee's plan to help bring in a bylaw that would restrict the cosmetic use of pesticides on private property by November, 2003.

The town stopped using pesticides on municipal land last year.

An apparent increase in cancer and asthma is the driving force behind the committee's move.

Mrs. Lobraico, spokesperson for a subcommittee of the environmental advisory committee, made an emotional pitch to council, asking to gradually rid Whitchurch-Stouffville of pesticides, including weed killers and

insecticides.

"As a committee, we can certainly initiate phase one, which is educating the community on the effects of pesticides on health and the environment," Mrs. Lobraico said, "and promote safe alternatives for lawn and garden care."

Ontario communities such as Markham, Owen Sound and even Toronto have already taken action against pesticides, she pointed out, adding Quebec has 45 pesticide-free communities.

Some pesticides are linked to eye and skin irritation, nausea, dizziness, headaches, diarrhea, blurred vision, fever and weakness, council heard.

Many chemicals in pesticides have been linked to non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, prostate cancer, reproductive problems and birth defects, Mrs. Lobraico added.

Ward 2 Councillor Mark Carroll backed the initiative. He wants town staff to give the committee guidance

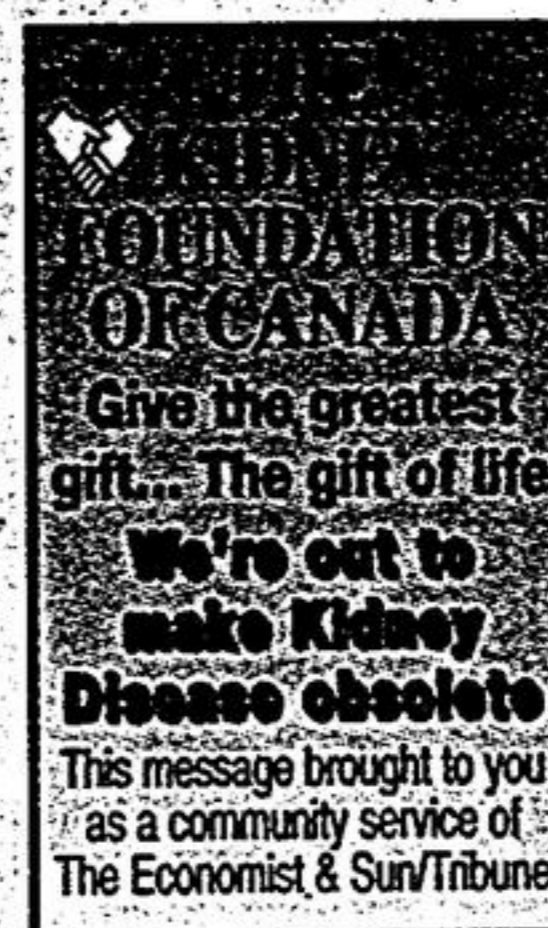
when dealing with the issue.

While Mayor Wayne Emmerson supported the principle of a pesticide-free town, he suggested the mission should include the municipal, provincial and federal governments.

Former Stouffville coun-

cillor Jim Sanders said the town doesn't need to wait for other levels of government.

"We have a federal royal commission on health, let's start at the local level," he said. "Let's do things now to prevent people from getting sick."



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Margaret L. May
Stouffville

Seniors' bus service continues to new A & P

BY HANNELORE VOLPE
Staff Writer

The bus service that has been a shopping lifeline for Stouffville seniors for more than a year will continue when the new A & P grocery store on Main Street near Sandale Road makes its debut Friday.

When the 40,000-square-foot facility opens, more seniors may start taking advantage of the service, noted Dave Darling, an A & P manager. That's because A & P will no longer be within walking distance of at least one seniors' residence, Parkview Village.

The bus, operated by Williamson's Special Care Transit, picks up seniors from the Eastern Gate Retirement Community, Testa Villa, Parkview Village and several points along Main Street every Monday and Thursday morning.

People have about an hour to shop before the ride home. "When the seniors are finished, we come back," said Joe Williamson, who has run the A & P route since November 2000. Anywhere from three to 12 people flag

down the bus each time. The local A & P began the free service after the IGA in midtown Stouffville closed.

The service isn't exclusively for seniors, Mr. Williamson said. "Anyone who wants to go shopping can ride the bus."

Information on the service is available at the A & P and locations such as the Eastern Gate Retirement Community, which is home to about 200 people with an average age of 70. "The service is appreciated," said office administrator Cathy Hope, because an estimated 25 to 30 percent of residents can't or don't drive.

Joe and Jane Williamson have been running Special Care Transit for the past four years, but have about 20 years experience in the business. This is their only shopping service at present. They usually transport groups from nursing homes, seniors' centres and other locations throughout York Region and the Greater Toronto Area.

Anyone who would like to catch the shopping bus can call Mr. Williamson at 1-888-646-8441.

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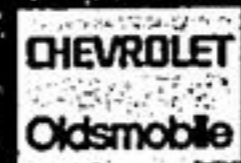
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