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26 The high cost of minor hockey worries new president of Stouffville association.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR
EVENT: Stouffville Lions Strawberry Festival BBQ
WHEN: Today, 4-7 p.m.
WHERE: Stouffville Memorial Park



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Housing crunch gets help from the region

Builders like incentives for affordable homes

BY JEFF MITCHELL
Staff Writer

Builders are prepared to buy into York Region's efforts to create more affordable housing, provided the right package of incentives is on the table, according to an industry representative.

"If the proposal is right and the program is right, there are a number of members very interested in this," said Jim Murphy, director of government relations with the Greater Toronto Home Builders Association.

He's optimistic the region's efforts to cut costs for builders, combined with new federal money aimed at subsidizing construction of rental units, will kick start construction of low-cost housing.

"Now that the (federal) program has been announced and the money's there, I think you'll start seeing it roll out in the next six months," Mr. Murphy said.

The region will look to the private sector to play a significant role in the creation of affordable housing under a strategy unveiled recently by Sylvia Patterson, York's director of housing.

The strategy sets a goal of 200 new affordable units a year, 100 of them region-built, non-profit spaces, with the remainder to be built in partnership with the private sector. It is hoped as many as

See APARTMENTS, page 10.

FLYING THE FESTIVAL FLAG



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Chuckleberry, the mascot of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Strawberry festival, will be a busy berry this weekend. The annual festival kicked off last night and runs through Monday's Canada Day events. Activities take place in downtown Stouffville and Memorial Park. See the Stouffville Sun/Tribune's festival guide with today's paper or call (905) 64BERRY for more information.

Private firms get council nod for old town hall

Supporters of other proposals boo, yell at council meeting

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Writer

The plan to turn the old Stouffville town hall into a multi-purpose centre and to return the municipal offices downtown was shot down by Whitchurch-Stouffville council Tuesday night.

Instead, the town will explore turning the top floor of the century-old landmark on Civic Avenue over to an architectural-engineering group and have the bottom floor of the all-brick building become a community cultural centre, housing art groups, including theatre.

Before picking Arrowsmith Architectural Group and its partner George Bell Engineering either to lease or buy the ground floor for community use, council listened to three other proposals Tuesday.

Bruce Arrowsmith told council he plans to restore the building, ensuring its heritage is preserved. As well, major landscaping is included in the plan. There will be plenty of



SUE SHERBAN: Councillor will keep up fight for her theatre/municipal office plan.

public access to Memorial Park. "I will create a pedestrian link," promised Mr. Arrowsmith.

"I have said all along, I am not going to spend \$4 or \$5 million on a new building," said Mayor Wayne Emmerson. "I support the Arrowsmith proposal. We will work with the arts and cultural community to see if we can use the bottom floor. We can explore this. We'll see about a theatre. We can work together."

The decision process was

See SHERBAN, page 5.

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