

# Sherban blasts council; will keep up fight

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When Ward 6 Councillor Sue Sherban lost her bid to turn the old town hall into a multi-purpose cultural centre, including a live theatre and to build an addition to the municipal offices, she took council to task for failing to support her.

Several supporters of the Sherban plan and other plans not picked voiced their displeasure loudly, shouting and booing at members of council from the rear of the council chambers.

After delivering a tongue-lashing, Councillor Sherban left the meeting, but not over council's decision on the town hall, she said later. She left to protest the way the town deals with proposals for new subdivisions — which were also on the agenda. About 200 residents packed the council chambers Tuesday night; most were attending three public hearings dealing with future residential growth. The public meetings ended at 1:10 a.m. Wednesday.

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"I left in protest," Councillor Sherban said in an interview Wednesday. "If I stayed, all I would do was blow smoke. Three members of council and the mayor sit there in silence all night while the people tell us they don't want these type of houses. What's the use of staying. So I left. I won't sit in silence."

Councillors Cliff Dunkeld, Peter Dobrich and Harry Bowes and the

mayor stayed for all of Tuesday night's sessions. Councillor Mark Carroll arrived late.

Councillor Sherban reminded council that she had the support of Stouffville's arts and culture community, including the Clock Tower Theatre, and the downtown Stouffville Business Improvement Area.

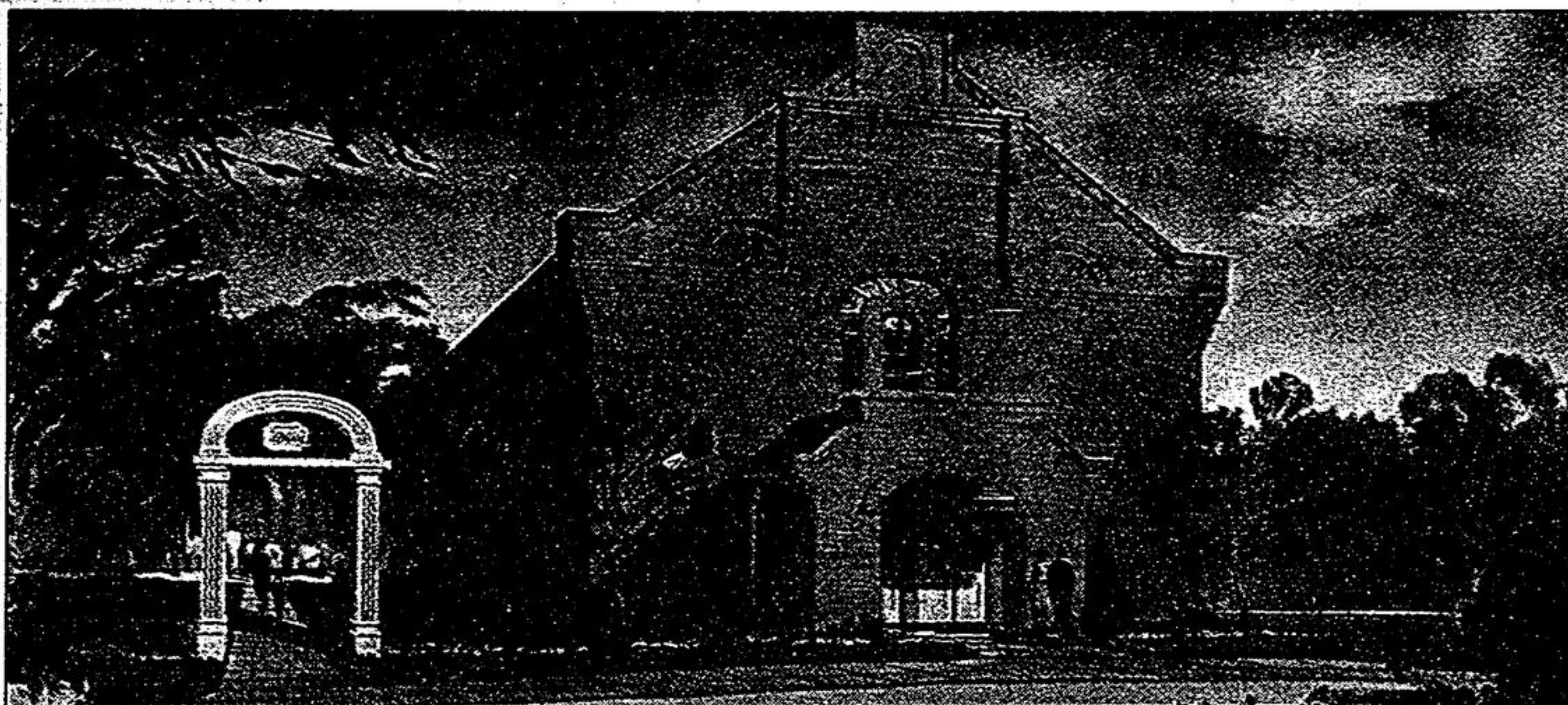
A few months ago, Councillor Sherban commissioned a consulting firm, The Ventin Group, to carry out a study of her plan, including a financial analysis.

Paul Sapounzi of The Ventin Group said the proposal was financially viable. He pointed out that the town presently pays \$74,000 a year to rent a 16,000-square-foot space on Sandiford Drive.

"If the town builds a new building in the downtown and combines it with the theatre, it would cost about \$3.3 million," said Mr. Sapounzi. "The town would have 20,000 square feet versus the 16,000 square feet, they have now. To finance this expenditure, it would cost \$79,000 a-year."

If the town opted for Councillor Sherban's plan, Mr. Sapounzi claims in 25 years, the town will have paid the building off using the rent money. "In the existing rented space, the town will have nothing in 25 years," he said.

Don Quarles, owner of Melody Man, an entertainment production company, proposed the town enter into a long-term lease agreement, launch a fundraising campaign and convert the building into a multi-purpose cultural centre, offering everything from community theatre to dance recitals to concerts. The Whitchurch-Stouffville resident did not suggest the municipal offices return to Civic Avenue.



Artist's conception of Stouffville's old town hall that town council will investigate. Private companies would use the second floor while the main floor would remain open to community organizations.

Mr. Quarles said the Canadian Fiddlers and Step Dancers Hall of Fame and Museum, which is looking for a new home, was interested in the town hall. His two daughters played their fiddles at the entrance to the town offices for people entering the meeting.

Mr. Quarles is also disappointed with council's decision. "It was my understanding that Mr. Arrowsmith's proposal dealt with the purchase of the building, not the condo lease of it. And it strikes me that the concept of the supposed town use on the first floor was an afterthought. Perhaps a little public and council pressure finally got the better of them," said Mr. Quarles on Wednesday.

In her proposal to the town, Karen Young of the Clock Tower Potters group

reminded council that existing tenants want to remain in the building. They include singers, potters, painters, a newspaper staff, musical groups and a transportation service group.

Ward 5 Councillor Harry Bowes said he was elected on "fiscal responsibility." The responsible and only choice is the architectural group, he stressed. "Arrowsmith is the only one satisfying my desires," said Councillor Bowes.

Councillor Sherban said she's not throwing in the towel. "I'm not quitting," she said Wednesday. "There's still a window of opportunity. Nothing is signed. I am going to ask people to lobby their councillor and ask council to reconsider this decision. People can ask council to not support this giveaway."

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