

# Arts centre in 2003 town study

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building from the town since 1999. Other cultural and business groups have also come before council hoping to make the building their permanent home.

At Tuesday's council meeting, artist Benny van Velsen represented the current tenants of the building, which include artists, potters, and musicians.

Their organization, the Clock Tower Artists Association, came before council to propose entering into a five-year agreement with the town "to realize (the building's) potential as a centre for the arts," Mrs. van Velsen said. The group currently pays rent to the Clock Tower Theatre Association, which covers all the utilities. The artists' plans included building studio space, creating a gallery, giving art lessons and opening a music and art supply store there.

Councillor Harry Bowes said that at \$9 per square foot the building could realize a yearly rent of more than \$60,000.

Councillor Peter Dobrich stated, "The building is the same way it was left four years ago." Mrs. van Velsen responded, "It is difficult to commit money if we don't know if we will be there in three months' time."

The town moved its offices four years ago to rented facilities in the Imperial Centre, at Main Street and Sandiford Drive, the site of Tuesday's meeting.

Wayne Daniels, interim chairperson of the Clock Tower Theatre Association, praised the tenants' group for increasing awareness of the arts in the community. His association "has a strong belief in the location (of the building) and a minimum 300-seat theatre."

A theatre would be the focal point of the old village of Stouffville, he said. Although there are currently locations in town for dramatic and musical performances in town, such as schools and community centres, they still "involve plastic stacking chairs and people fighting for the front row," Mr. Daniels said.

**The Clock Tower Theatre Association "has been raising money since 1996 and has raised \$8,000."**

-Councillor Harry Bowes

A number of local dance and drama performances are held in theatres in Markham and Vaughan because there are no adequate facilities in town.

The theatre association has been working on a partnership with Worldwide Theatre Services Inc. for seating, lighting and other renovations, Mr. Daniels said.

Councillor Harry Bowes noted the Clock Tower Theatre Association "has been raising money since 1996 and has raised \$8,000."

Clarence Fockler, the president of the Silver Jubilee Seniors' Club, said that the club has been on Main Street for 25 years. Lack of space there has confined seniors' activities mainly to table games, although there is an art group and craft group. "Parking is a problem for a number of seniors," he said.

Seniors that now travel to larger seniors' centres in Markham or Uxbridge will stay in town if there is a better seniors' centre here.

"I understood that the old town hall was available," Mr. Fockler said, "but I hear today that there are other people in there."

He expressed concerns about the structural problems at the old town hall and about inadequate parking, "but we do like the location in the centre of town," he added.

When Councillor Dobrich questioned him on the vote taken by the seniors, Mr. Fockler replied that about 75 per cent were in favour of moving into the old town hall and about 25 per cent were against.

"I have always supported the seniors moving to the bottom floor (of the building)," Mayor Wayne Emmerson said. The town also needs a proper arts and cultural facility, he added.

A theatre and arts facility will be one of the items assessed in a leisure services study, which should be complete by next June.

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<p>GO MOUNT JOY WEEKDAY TRAINS SOUTHBOUND TO UNION</p> <p>6:17 a.m. (arrive at Union at 7:05 a.m.) 6:55 a.m. (arrive at Union at 7:43 a.m.) 7:28 a.m. (arrive at Union at 8:16 a.m.)</p>	<p>GO MOUNT JOY WEEKDAY TRAINS NORTHBOUND FROM UNION</p> <p>4:18 p.m. (arrive at Mount Joy at 5:03 p.m.) 4:48 p.m. (arrive at Mount Joy at 5:33 p.m.) 5:20 p.m. (arrive at Mount Joy at 6:05 p.m.)</p>
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\*Train times at other stations along this line will NOT change with the opening of Mount Joy station.

