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Mayor blasts region over dry wells

BY KATHLEEN GRIFFIN
Staff Writer

Markham Mayor Don Cousens slammed the Region of York at Tuesday night's council meeting over the de-watering issues plaguing north Markham residents.

"This council is at a crossroads with the region," he said. "We are disappointed on how they are dealing with the constituents on this issue."

Dozens of private wells have been contaminated or have dried up completely during the region's trunk sewer

construction projects along the Ninth Line and 16th Avenue.

In order to install the nine-foot-high pipes deep underground, de-watering — the continuous withdrawal of surrounding groundwater — is necessary.

Regional staff have insisted the 16th Avenue sewer project could not affect anyone further away than two or three kilometres, but some residents up to seven kilometres away have suffered well problems.

The region's contractor, McNally/AECON, has been forced to

supply tanks of water to dozens of homes and increase the depth of well pumps at others.

But that has been a stop-gap solution at best and now the region is threatening to stop supplying water unless residents can prove de-watering is responsible.

On Tuesday, Mayor Cousens said Markham councillors intend to continue working with the region to find solutions.

"We ourselves are not happy with the way the de-watering has been handled," he said.

— with files from Mike Adler

Robbins running in Stouffville

Fred Robbins, a self-employed carpenter and a track-and-field competitor, is making a second bid for a seat on Whitchurch-Stouffville council.

Mr. Robbins, 48, has filed papers to contest Ward 4 in the municipal election, slated for Nov. 10.

The ward is currently represented by Cliff Dunkeld. While Mr. Dunkeld hasn't filed papers, he has stated his interest in returning for a fourth term providing his doctor gives him a clean bill of health during a checkup scheduled for April.

Mr. Dunkeld defeated Mr. Robbins in the 2000 municipal vote.

Mr. Robbins has served on several town committees, including the Whitchurch-Stouffville Heritage Board. A runner and track coach, he has regularly attended council meetings for the past six years.

— Joan Ransberry

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