

Average property tax bill may rise \$35

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Reporter

Markham homeowners could be asked to dig a little deeper into their pockets to come up with an extra \$35.08 on average if a proposed municipal tax increase is adopted.

The 3.9-per-cent hike becomes reality if Markham council accepts a recommendation made by a town committee to pass a \$258.7-million budget.

The proposed budget is to be presented to the public and the

business community at a breakfast meeting Jan. 25. It will be reviewed by the town's finance and administrative committee Jan. 31. Council is expected to vote on it at a Feb. 8 meeting.

Last year, taxes on a home assessed at \$358,000 were to \$3,697.

The proposed budget represents 25.03 per cent of the three-way bill, budget chief Dan Horchick said. Education takes up 28.39 per cent and York Region's share is 46.58 per cent.

A town's increase is "reason-

'We face a number of challenges. There's always a need for more staff because of growth.'

Dan Horchick
Markham budget chief

able given the circumstances," Mr. Horchick said. "We face a number of challenges. There's always a need for more staff because of growth. It's a challenge from year

to year. It's always a matter to deal with."

Markham is also facing aging infrastructure, Mr. Horchick said. "That includes all our sewer lines and all our water lines as well as vehicles, facilities, parks and bridges. We have to make sure we have sufficient funds over the year to maintain and repair the infrastructure. As well, the cost of waste collection is up."

Despite the challenges, Mr. Horchick does not expect the bottom line to have a negative impact on services.

COUNCIL DIGEST

Town experiments with outdoor rinks

Outdoor rinks will soon be built at Bayview Lane Park and Mintleaf Park.

Markham council gave the go-ahead for the pilot project Tuesday. The rinks will be open to all residents this winter.

Bayview Lane Park is in the Bayview Avenue and Romfield Circuit area of Thornhill, while Mintleaf Park is in the Fincham Avenue and Wootton Way area.

A local volunteer organization is being set up to oversee the rinks. Training in the preparation, maintenance and operation will be provided by town staff.

Staff is to report to council next fall on the success of the pilot project and make recommendations regarding the establishment of a permanent outdoor rink program.

User fees going up

Markham's recreation user fees are on the rise.

Markham council agreed Tuesday to an additional charge of \$2 per registration for programs and \$5 for a fitness membership. Meanwhile, there will be an additional charge of \$20 per hour for ice and indoor soccer field rentals.

The increases will be effective Sept. 1, 2005.

Rotary Club honoured

The Markham-Unionville Rotary Club took a bow at a council meeting.

The local service club was recognized for its contribution to the quality of life and its service to the community.

The local club will join Rotary International Feb. 23 to celebrate 100 years of service to both the local and international community. Rotary International is best known for its PoliPlus initiative, aimed at freeing the world of polio by February, 2005. Council was told that the next big project for Rotary will be the AIDS pandemic. Council proclaimed the week of Feb. 21 Rotary Week.

Crowe re-elected Catholic board chairperson

The York Catholic District School Board has re-elected Aurora/King/Whitchurch-Stouffville Trustee Elizabeth Crowe as chairperson and Vaughan Trustee Dino Giuliani as vice-chairperson for 2005.

Ms Crowe has been a trustee since 1994 and chairperson for six years. She has served on several board committees, including chairperson of business affairs, vice-chairperson of budget/audit and chairperson of the labour relations.

"It's a pleasure to serve as chair, as this is my passion and I consider this to be my vocation," Ms Crowe said. "This is an exciting time for our board. Now we have a vision and we are moving ahead on that path."

In the end, our students' achievement, combined with a faith-filled learning community will be our success story.

This will be Mr. Giuliani's second term as vice-chairperson. A trustee since 1997, he has been active on board committees, including budget/audit, labour relations, special education advisory and the joint board consortium.



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