

# Econo Taxi stalls after 8 years

*Business sold to numbered company*

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Staff Writer

Stouffville's local taxi company, Econo Taxi, is calling it quits, picking up its last fare at the end of the month.

Econo Taxi Limo Services Ltd., which has driven local residents, particularly seniors and young people, has sold its business to a numbered company, co-owner Theresa Bray said.

Mrs. Bray operated the business with her husband Wayne for about eight years.

Econo Taxi runs five cabs, while Today's Taxi, which services mainly the northern part of the municipality, has eight.

"It's the end of an era," Mrs. Bray said. "We will miss everybody in town."

With the couple sharing driving duties with hired drivers and often being on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, they decided to sell the business to have more time for their family. Mrs. Bray plans to take the summer off before deciding on their next enterprise.

The demise of the taxi

business "is disappointing," Mayor Sue Sherban said. "Econo has grown with the community and they knew our seniors and our kids."

The town has received no notice as to who the new owners might be, Mrs. Sherban said.

"If the company that bought Econo is not local, it will be a loss to the community," Mrs. Sherban said. "We could lose that personal touch."

The mayor doesn't believe tighter regulations brought in last year for the local taxi industry limiting the age of vehicles and increased maintenance requirements were a factor in deciding to close operations.

Although increasing costs helped prompt the closure, it was not the main motivator, Mrs. Bray said.

During the past eight years, things got "tougher and tougher in the industry," Mrs. Bray said.

The taxi company raised its rates in 2000 and 2004 to try to recoup some of the rising costs of gas prices, employee wages, new cars and insurance.

"We have always tried to limit the amount of increases because most of the customers were sen-

iors," Mrs. Bray said.

When the taxi company first started, the owners had a choice of five insurance companies for their business; now there are only two.

Friendships the couple formed with the many seniors and young people they've taken to their destinations will be missed the most, Mrs. Bray said.

The taxi drivers became so familiar with Stouffville that customers began asking for their destination by the person's name.

# Failed tattoo bylaw cost \$14,400

A failed bylaw to restrict the location of tattoo parlours in downtown Stouffville cost local taxpayers more than \$14,400.

The fees went to a lawyer and consultant to formulate a bylaw just before The Freak Ink tattoo studio was to open its doors on Main Street in early April.

The proposed bylaw included restrictions on where such businesses could be located, including near schools and in the downtown core.

Resident Dave Probert had asked that the costs of the bylaw be disclosed.

After receiving up to 30 phone calls and e-mails in March from local residents concerned about the location of the new business, Mayor Sue Sherban decided to have the bylaw drawn up for council's consideration.

Two school principals and eight merchants voiced their opposition to the tattoo parlour. Councillors and residents received notice of the

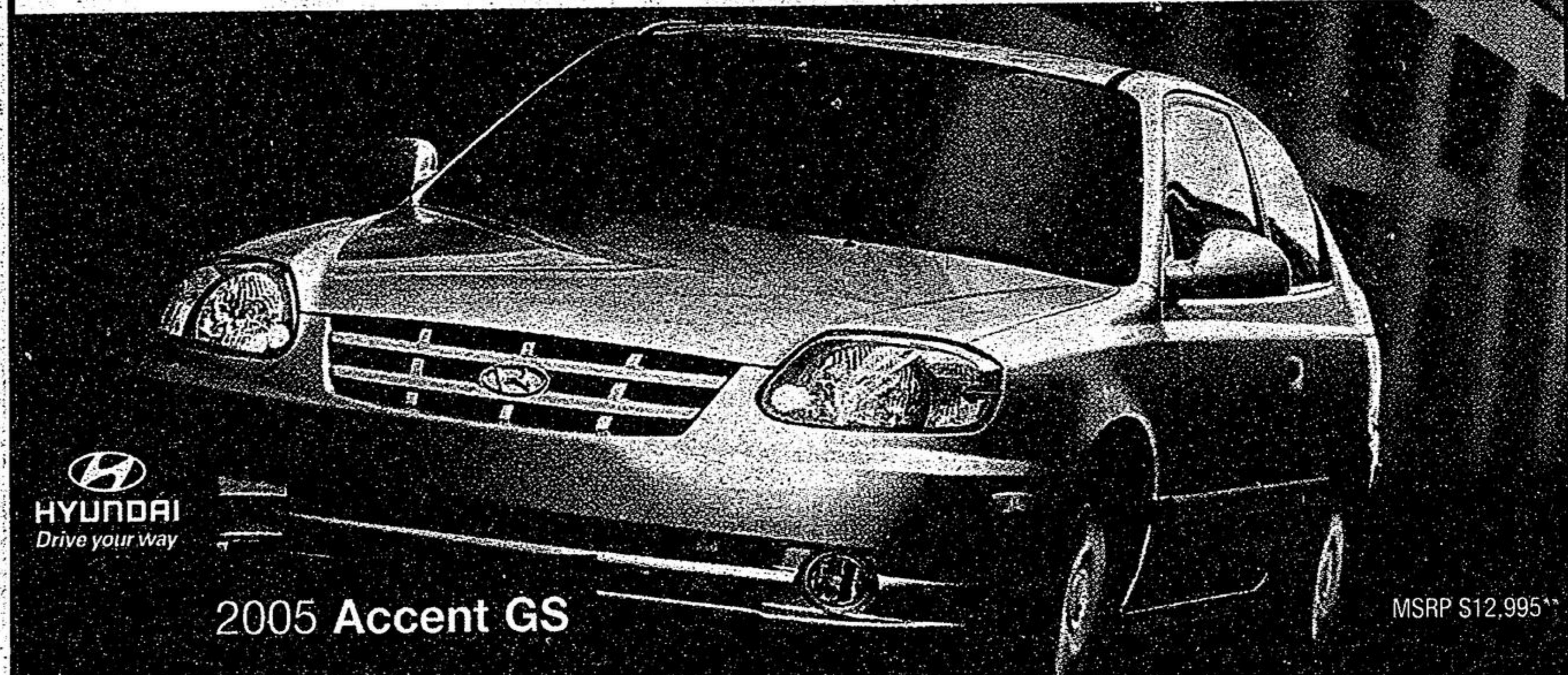
meeting just five days in advance.

Meanwhile, support for the business came from numerous residents, including some local business people at the March 29 meeting. Council unanimously rejected the bylaw, deeming it too draconian.

The tattoo parlour opened its doors for business shortly afterwards.

No further complaints were received by her office, town clerk Michele Kennedy said.

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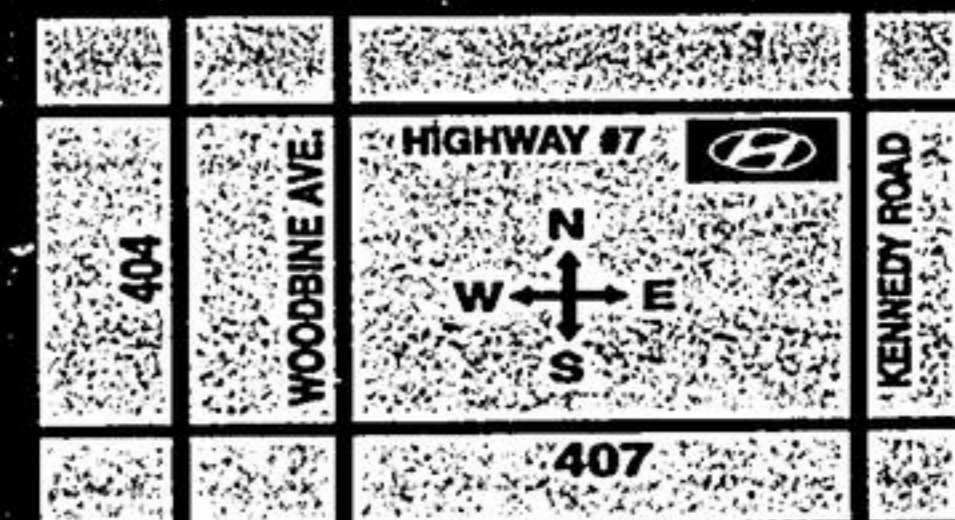
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