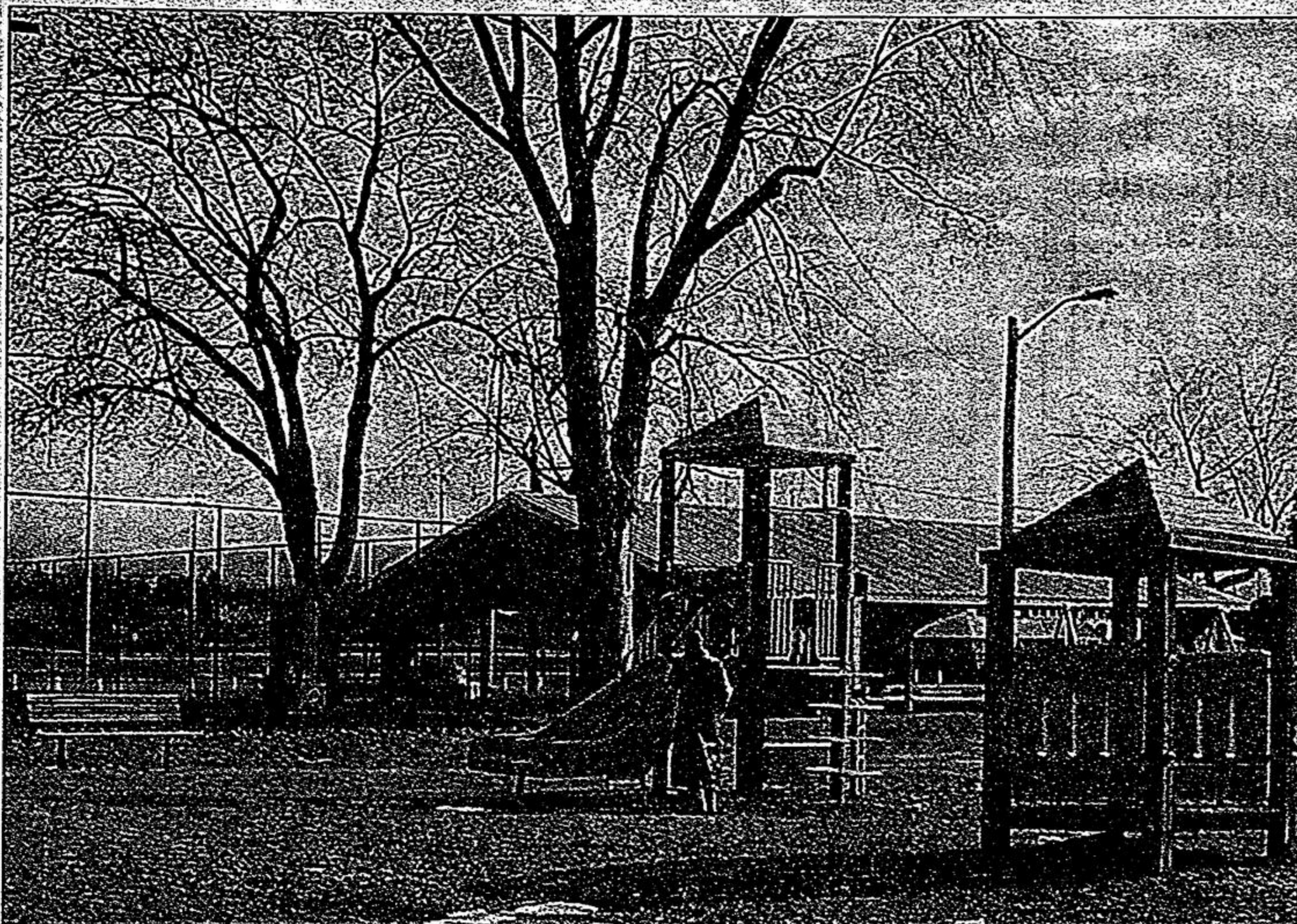


# Residents, consultants differ on park changes



STAFF PHOTO/HANNELORE VOLPE

Stouffville Memorial Park will change when Park Drive extends south. Two ball diamonds, a basketball court and the lawn bowling club will be moved.

BY JIM THOMAS  
Correspondent

Major road surgery will ultimately change the face of Stouffville Memorial Park.

The extension of Park Drive south of Main Street, a project already approved by council, will result in major park alterations, residents at a public meeting at EastRidge church were told.

What will remain, what will be removed and what will be added depends to a great extent on recommendations received from park users, architect Robert Lockhart told the gathering.

The firm of Brian Basterfield & Associates of Peterborough has been hired to create a plan providing active and passive forms of recreation on the 56-acre site.

Some, however, were vehemently opposed to anything being done, including Bob Lewis of Bloomington.

"You'll destroy our park," he said. "Leave it alone."

Dave Probert of Lemonville urged caution in dealing with a property he described as "unique and part of the town's history."

"I have an awful feeling you'll be doing away with park heritage."

The Park Drive extension was not

part of the meeting's agenda since the decision to proceed had already been made, Mr. Lockhart said.

"The present park isn't perfect," he said. "Here's an opportunity to make it better."

Changes already approved include removing the sewage treatment plant and re-locating the recycling plant, lawn bowling club, basketball court, skate-board park and two ball diamonds.

Plans are also in the works to enlarge the Lebovic Leisure Centre, improve neighbouring Civic Square and parking and add an east-west laneway across the north end of the site.

**'I've heard your passions. We have a significant task on our hands.'**

architect Robert Lockhart to Whitchurch-Stouffville residents on changes to Stouffville Memorial Park

Other changes could include removing the tennis courts, public works buildings and the main ball diamond and closing Burkholder and Church streets. The outdoor pool's fate has not been decided.

The diamonds would be replaced in the new Bethesda Park, Mr. Lockhart said. Three soccer fields are also planned there.

He described Memorial Park as "a bit of a hodge-podge."

Now, we have a chance to move things around, to enhance both the park and the downtown," he said.

Strong feelings were expressed over the main ball diamond and adjacent grandstand.

"Over the years, I've played ball in many towns," said Howie Burkholder, manager of the Stouffville Menno's senior fastball club. "But Stouffville, with its main diamond and bleachers, is unique."

He urged they be left alone. Jill McWhinnie described the park as "a place within the community that's near and dear to the hearts of all those who've lived here many years."

"They retain a long-time attachment," she said.

It could cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to re-build the outdoor pool, Mr. Lockhart said.

"It's pretty close to the end of its life," he said.

A modern-day splash pool could be installed for up to \$125,000, he stated.

"I've heard your passions," Mr. Lockhart concluded, "We have a significant task on our hands."

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