

# OPINION

**Stouffville Sun-Tribune**  
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Box 154, Stouffville, ON, L4A 7Z5  
PUBLISHER *Ian Proudfoot*

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## Editorial

### Keep developers out of elections

What would fans think if the captain of a hockey team handed the referee a fistfull of dollars just before the puck was dropped?

Most would agree, it just doesn't seem right.

So, why are land developers still allowed to donate to candidates for municipal councils when, in many ways, the relationship between the two is akin to the player and the referee?

Municipal politicians work hand-in-hand with land developers, making sure they follow the rules to create the best projects for their communities.

Some York Region politicians understand the potential for conflict, refusing to take donations from the industry.

Markham Regional Councillor Jack Heath, for instance, has refused development money.

Mr. Heath is in the minority.

According to a report by York University political science professor Robert MacDermid, the bulk of campaign donations in the 905 area come from companies tied to the development industry.

It appears municipal politicians, especially those in boom regions such as York, aren't willing to get off the development gravy train so easily.

It's time to force their hand by changing the Municipal Act.

How will our municipal politicians fund their campaigns?

Prof. MacDermid argues apathetic 905 voters are to blame because they don't contribute to municipal campaigns the way Torontonians do, so developers simply take up the slack.

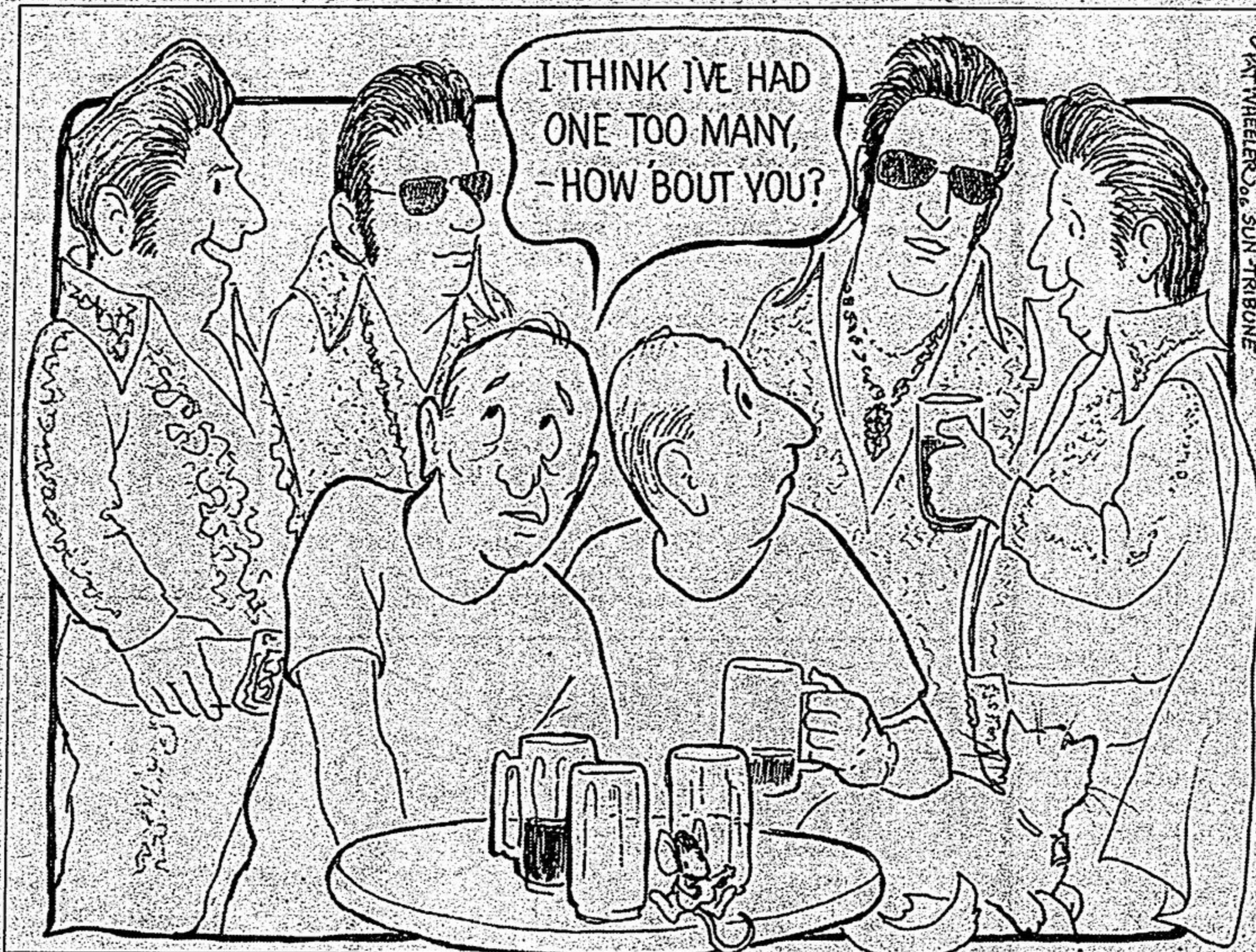
But if developers were taken out of the equation, that relatively ready source of funding would dry up, forcing municipal politicians to solicit individuals for funds.

And that would mean they would have to run on real ideas to gain support, instead of spending developers' money to plaster election signs all over the municipality.

Municipalities that don't have a cash rebate program for individual campaign contributors should start one and publicize it. Markham gives rebates of up to \$350 for individuals who donate to municipal campaigns.

Municipal politicians, especially those in boom towns, should be forced to kick the developer donation habit now.

Waiting until the well dries up, after developers move on to the next growth region, would be purely academic.



### Off The Top

with *Jim Mason*

### In search of town creature or renegade painters

Calls for an arts and culture centre aside, what this town needs is a big honking creature at its entrance.

Not the real deal, but a sculpture.

You'll see them as you vacation across North America like Chevy Chase this summer.

Wawa has its Canada goose, perched on a hill over the Trans-Canada Highway and Lake Superior.

Bemidji Minn., has mythical lumberjack Paul Bunyan. And so do dozens of other towns across the United States, according to roadsideamerica.com (What a lumberjack is doing in Seminole, Fla., I have no clue, but it's there.)

Sudbury has the big nickel.

There are muskies and walleyes and giant chickens and pigs greeting motorists at municipal borders across this continent.

Whitchurch-Stouffville has zip, at least for now.

And with the Stouffville Country Market about to shut down next year, we need something new to set us apart from every other town or city here in this rapidly urbanizing jungle called southern Ontario.

The big flea, once the mascot of the market, is out, unless we're shooting for a historical reference.

The Clipper ship on Stouffville minor hockey team uniforms is fetching. But how a town many miles away from being a port of call adopted a ship is also beyond my comprehension.

Whitchurch-Stouffville may be best known for the strawberry festival, centred around the Canada Day weekend annually. Chuckleberry, the festival mascot, has a way of freaking out some small children. That might not be wise if we're trying to entice people to join us here. Maybe a new-look berry would work?

Or maybe we paint our name and a message on the water tower on the Tenth Line or the new one on Bethesda Road.

Let's get a posse of painters with ladders, rollers and wild colours. Maybe call in the Latham Gallery for guidance. We'll take the tower by storm.

First, we'll have to come up with a slogan for the tower.

There's the traditional "Country Close to the City", which is fine as long as we have some country left.

"The CN Tower is 45 minutes south, this is the Stouffville tower," works for me. Same with: "Smile, this is a radar trap and you've just been caught speeding."

Or maybe we'll be real different and say, "Not the home of Paul Bunyan."

*Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.*

## Letters to the Editor

### Residents bypass Main Street lights and Stouffville's businesses

When we moved to Stouffville eight years ago, we had high expectations for the town's development.

Unfortunately, we have been disappointed with the administration of the town.

The ugly black painted lamp posts, the numerous traffic lights, the all-day rush hour traffic on Main Street and the population signs leading into town disagreeing on how many people live in Stouffville are good examples.

Even at 5:30 a.m. when we drive to work through Stouffville on Main, we face stoppages due to red traffic lights when there is no cross traffic. What a waste of gas and unnecessary wear and tear on our cars.

To overcome this, we find alternative routes, thus bypassing the town all together, which is not good for the local businesses.

Speaking of local businesses, we are especially upset with the town's handling of K9s in Kahoots. This local business has been a great asset for our dog and, thanks to it, we have an extremely sociable and well-behaved dog.

And now we see the town dealing with a complaint against this business that could see it leave Stouffville.

I thought and understood the mandate of the mayor was to encourage businesses to come to Stouffville so we do not end up a bedroom city such as Markham.

Our complaints will be registered in November.

**IAN SHIMMIN**  
STOUFFVILLE

The Stouffville Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters.

All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Stouffville Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space. Write:

Letters to the Editor,  
P.O. Box 154, Stouffville, L4A 7Z5,  
e-mail [jmason@yrmg.com](mailto:jmason@yrmg.com)  
or fax 905-294-1538.

### Town should work with owner to keep shop in community

It has come to our attention K9s in Kahoots on Main Street is in danger of being closed.

We ask that the mayor and council take a further look at the current bylaw and, if necessary, amend it to accommodate this business.

Council recently appointed a working committee that is looking at the rejuvenation of our downtown and we ask that the town retain and maintain this thriving business on our Main Street.

I am sure Ms Johnson of K9s in Kahoots would be willing to work with the town to come to a favourable solution.

**HELENE M. JOHNSON**  
PRESIDENT & CEO  
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

<p><b>EDITORIAL</b> Editor <i>Jim Mason</i> <a href="mailto:jmason@yrmg.com">jmason@yrmg.com</a></p> <p>Assistant Editor <i>Rick Vanderlinde</i> <a href="mailto:rvanderlinde@yrmg.com">rvanderlinde@yrmg.com</a></p> <p><b>INTERACTIVE MEDIA</b> Marketing &amp; Advertising Manager <i>Dawna Andrews</i> <a href="mailto:dandrews@yrmg.com">dandrews@yrmg.com</a></p>	<p><b>ADVERTISING</b> Classified Manager <i>Ann Campbell</i> <a href="mailto:acampbell@yrmg.com">acampbell@yrmg.com</a></p> <p>Assistant Classified Manager <i>Bonnie Rondeau</i> <a href="mailto:brondeau@yrmg.com">brondeau@yrmg.com</a></p> <p>Retail Manager <i>Stacey Allen</i> <a href="mailto:sallen@yrmg.com">sallen@yrmg.com</a></p>	<p>New Business Development Manager <i>Mike Rogerson</i> <a href="mailto:mrogerson@yrmg.com">mrogerson@yrmg.com</a></p> <p><b>PRODUCTION</b> Team Leader <i>Sherry Day</i> <a href="mailto:sday@yrmg.com">sday@yrmg.com</a></p>	<p><b>EDITORIAL</b> 905-513-1717 Fax: 905-513-7525</p> <p><b>ADVERTISING</b> 905-513-1717/Classified 1-800-743-3353/Fax: 905-853-1765</p> <p><b>DISTRIBUTION</b> 905-513-1717</p> <p>Canadian Circulations <b>CCED</b> Ontario Press Council</p>	<p><b>Stouffville Sun-Tribune</b> A York Region Newspaper Group community newspaper</p> <p>The Sun-Tribune, published every Thursday and Saturday, is a member of the Metroland Printing, Publishing and Distributing Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. Metroland is comprised of 70 community publications across Ontario. The York Region Newspaper Group includes The Liberal, serving Richmond Hill and Thornhill, Vaughan Citizen, The Economist &amp; Sun (Markham), The Era-Banner (Newmarket/Aurora), Georgina Advocate, York Region Business Times, North of the City, <a href="http://yorkregion.com">yorkregion.com</a> and York Region Printing.</p>
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