

# OPINION

**Stouffville Sun-Tribune**  
 A Metroland community newspaper  
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## Editorial

### Let little man have his say

Our region is served well when its citizens are informed and actively participate in the decisions affecting day-to-day life.

But when well-meaning citizens are strong-armed for speaking up, the whole community is harmed because it sends a message that the price of involvement is too high.

That's exactly what is happening in the latest twist in an Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) appeal hearing, during which environmental watchdog Carrie Hoffelner squared off against one of the biggest developers in York Region.

The heart of Ms Hoffelner's argument was her belief there would be a potential danger of water and sewage lines being run through the natural core of the moraine to service the new homes if the project got the go-ahead without the services being mapped out.

This wasn't the first time she has raised concerns about proposed development of the protected lands. She has attended other public appeal hearings, but it seems she drew the ire of the developers this time around because she participated on her own, as a citizen, without the benefit of the lawyer she says she can't afford.

The Metrus Group, which was successful in its bid to build the housing, is now asking the OMB to force Ms Hoffelner to pay \$10,000 of their legal costs because they say she acted "clearly unreasonably ... by failing to adequately define her issues" during the hearing and by "failing to present evidence in support of her position".

In essence, they feel Ms Hoffelner wasted their time and resources.

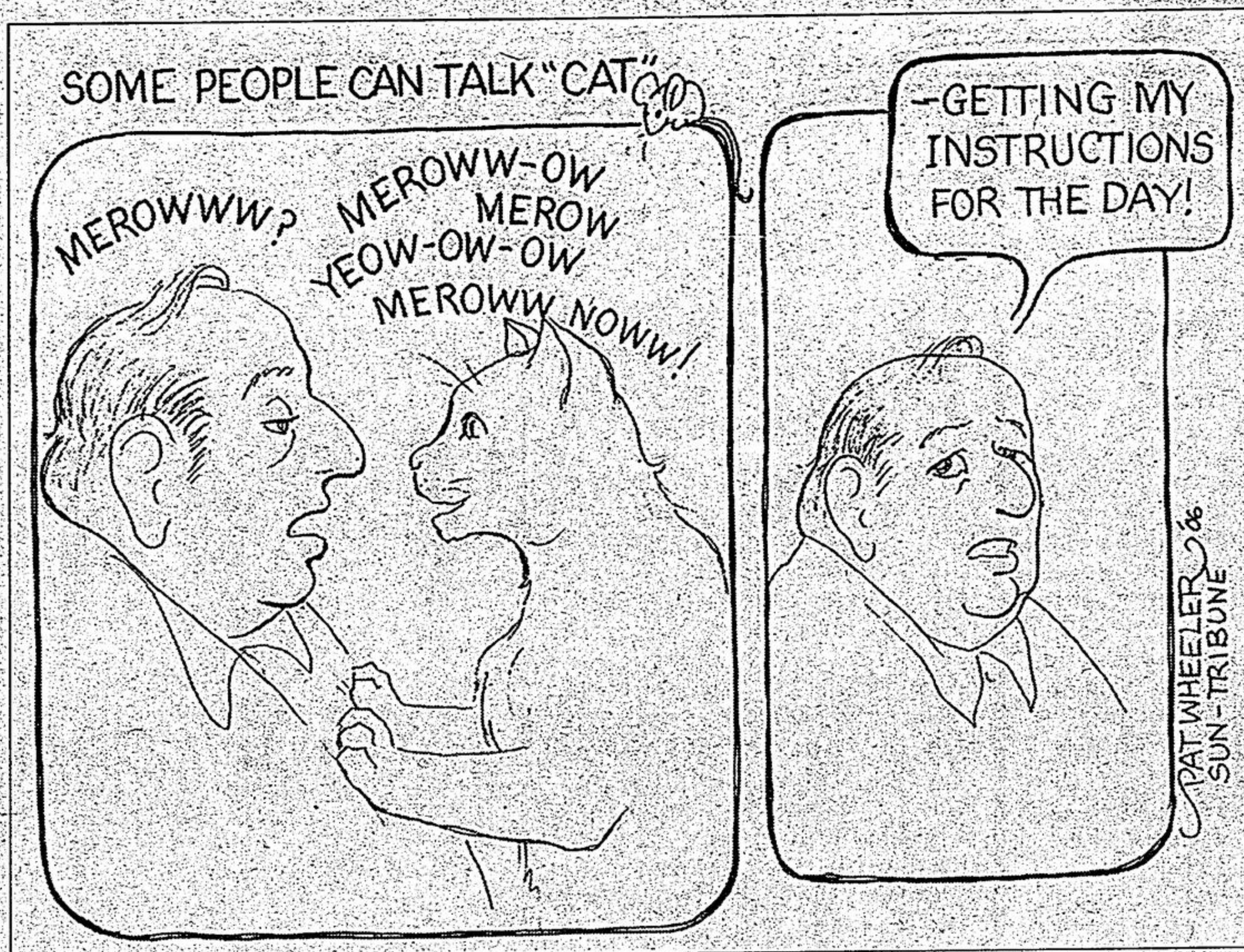
Last time we looked, the OMB was a place where people from the community went when they couldn't resolve their differences on community planning issues.

That's not to say anyone with concerns about an issue should just show up and ramble on. The onus is on the "little guy" to do enough homework to be able, upon stepping up to the stage, make the best use of this important democratic opportunity, which Ms Hoffelner did, having been involved in the Oak Ridges Moraine since 1999.

What is troublesome about this case is big business shouldn't be playing this kind of game with someone from the community who has done nothing but try in good faith to help protect and preserve the environment.

When a business uses tactics like this against an individual who opposes it, that shames us all.

Let people feel free to speak for themselves on public matters like this, without fear of crippling financial retaliation.



## Off The Top

with Jim Mason  
*If elected, I promise to ...*

When I am your mayor or ward councillor, things will be different.

I say this with the knowledge I will never run for public office. That is, unless my family is being held hostage and I can only secure their release by running in fictitious Ward 7. The logjam that is Main Street during rush hours is more likely to dissolve.

Covering Whitchurch-Stouffville council for much of the 1980s made me realize municipal politics is too much about necessary procedure and stuffy late night meetings and not enough about helping people and doing the right thing.

That's not the fault of the participants, who should be thanked early and often for becoming municipal politicians. That's our system, neighbours.

I've suggested cash bars, giveaways and theme nights at council meeting, all to deaf ears.

And with meeting attendance thriving, thanks largely to the many growth related issues, maybe the gimmicks are unnecessary. And who really needs another Harry Bowes bobblehead doll anyway?

My to do list would include:  
 • Synchronizing west-end Main Street's multitude of traffic lights during prime time to allow for a freer flow of vehicles. (Hopefully, the opening of other east-west roads through Stouffville will also ease our commuting pain.)

• A crackdown on ugly and unkempt buildings and yards, especially on major arteries. As pretty a job as our Communities in Bloom volunteers, municipal employees and diligent property owners do, one bad apple can spoil the bunch.

• A theatre/arts complex that works for the community. Hopefully, the town got it right with its plans for the old town hall at 19 Civic Ave. Kudos to council for making a decision, finally, and to the residents who fought for such a facility for so many years.

• A new arena with individual seats, property heating and audible sound, all worthy of a community of this size. A new rink will be built in Whitchurch-Stouffville and paid for by development fees this decade. Let's do it right. Standards for spectators and participants have long surpassed the 20-year-old main ice pad at the Stouffville Arena.

• A new location for the Stouffville market, perhaps this town's largest calling card. Let's not lose that heritage when the Country Market location closes. Surely, there's another spot for the market that also makes financial sense.

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

## Letters to the Editor

### Breaking more bylaws on Hemlock

The rebels of Hemlock Drive are at it again. We have received another ticket.

Over the past couple of years, we have broken the Stouffville bylaws. We have rescued vehicles from the highway that are disabled and could cause problems to traffic and parked them in front of our house until a tow truck could take them away. Wrong move on our part, we received a parking ticket. Wrong time of year, month, day, hour. Whatever, we got a ticket for breaking the bylaw.

On some occasions, we request guests to leave their keys and vehicles with us rather than drive home. But these people happen to impede the sidewalk, so we obtain another ticket. Twice we have approached Keith Saunders of the bylaw department on the appropriate parking positions for our driveway, but we just can't seem to get it correct.

We do our best to follow the bylaws. Do we have obnoxious neighbours who watch us and complain or do the bylaw officers have nothing better to do than sit back and watch for our next move?

Well, they found our next faux pas. A member of our family had the nerve to park on the street in front of our house, as not to impede the sacred sidewalk that leads to the busy Tenth Line. But she had a for sale sign on the back window. We broke another law. Who knew?

We don't water on the off days and a lot of people do. We poop and scoop. A lot of you don't and we know who you are. We don't hang garage sale signs on the post in front of our house and leave them there. If there is a book of bylaw rules, we would like to obtain one so we could become the law-abiding citizens we thought we were.

**TERI & JOHN MCTAVISH**  
 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, 6290 Main St., Stouffville, L4A 1G7, e-mail [jmason@yrng.com](mailto:jmason@yrng.com) or fax 905-640-8778.

### Newcomers not to be feared

*Re: With change comes crime, letter to the editor by Ken Sandiford, Aug. 19.*

Mr Sandiford, if you want to live in a perfect town, then you had better start the petition to build a glass dome to cover Stouffville to keep us "new" people out.

We are decent people and if you bother to talk to any of the people moving in, you'll find the same about them. You might actually know some of them. Heck, maybe their parents have lived here for 100 years.

I know the Clubines and the Ratcliffs. I know the Barkeys and Lehmans. Heck, a few of the Lehmans were even at our wedding.

Stouffville is not Utopia. It already has crime, drugs, theft and vandalism. Believe me, we see it. Some of those criminals' families have been here for 100 years, too.

I fear the only thing people need to worry about, is people like you being close-minded about change. We're not pushing you out of town; you're pushing yourself out.

**LISA THOMPSON**  
 STOUFFVILLE

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