

Parking fees irk business

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for their shops.

"Once you have something really nice looking in the downtown core," Mrs. Johnson said, "others want to get on to the Main Street."

One bone of contention, however, is the town's policy of charging new businesses, or those looking to expand, a fee if they don't have room on their properties for adequate parking. Fees can exceed \$100,000. The chamber is not amused.

A new policy is being written offering relief from fees or an alternate payment schedule, Mr. Cash said.

"Seventy per cent of the growth in a community will come from the existing businesses," Mr. Cash said.

An industrial plaza in Gormley will eventually be the new home of Anderson Haulage, which is now on the Stouffville Plaza site on Main Street, and many other enterprises.

The Stouffville Country Market property will likely be the site of retailers, such as grocery and convenience stores, dry cleaners and small restaurants or fast food outlets.

"The market is something we would like to keep within the community."

However, no applications have yet been received by the town for development of the site on Tenth Line north of Main Street.

And the market might not be closing next year after all.

"There is a possibility that the timing might be extended," Tom Parry, the town's director of development services, said.

Market officials couldn't confirm changes to their original closing date of December 2007.

The town is looking at alternative sites for the market.

"The market is something we would like to keep within the community," Mr. Parry said, "particularly as it relates to the farmers' market part of it."

The increased activity in the business sector is due partly to more aggressive efforts by the town to pump up economic development.

Another reason is the number of new families moving here and the large areas of serviced commercial lands ready to welcome new businesses.

Whitchurch-Stouffville's population will grow from approximately 24,000 to more than 42,000 in 2013 and more than 53,000 in 2021.

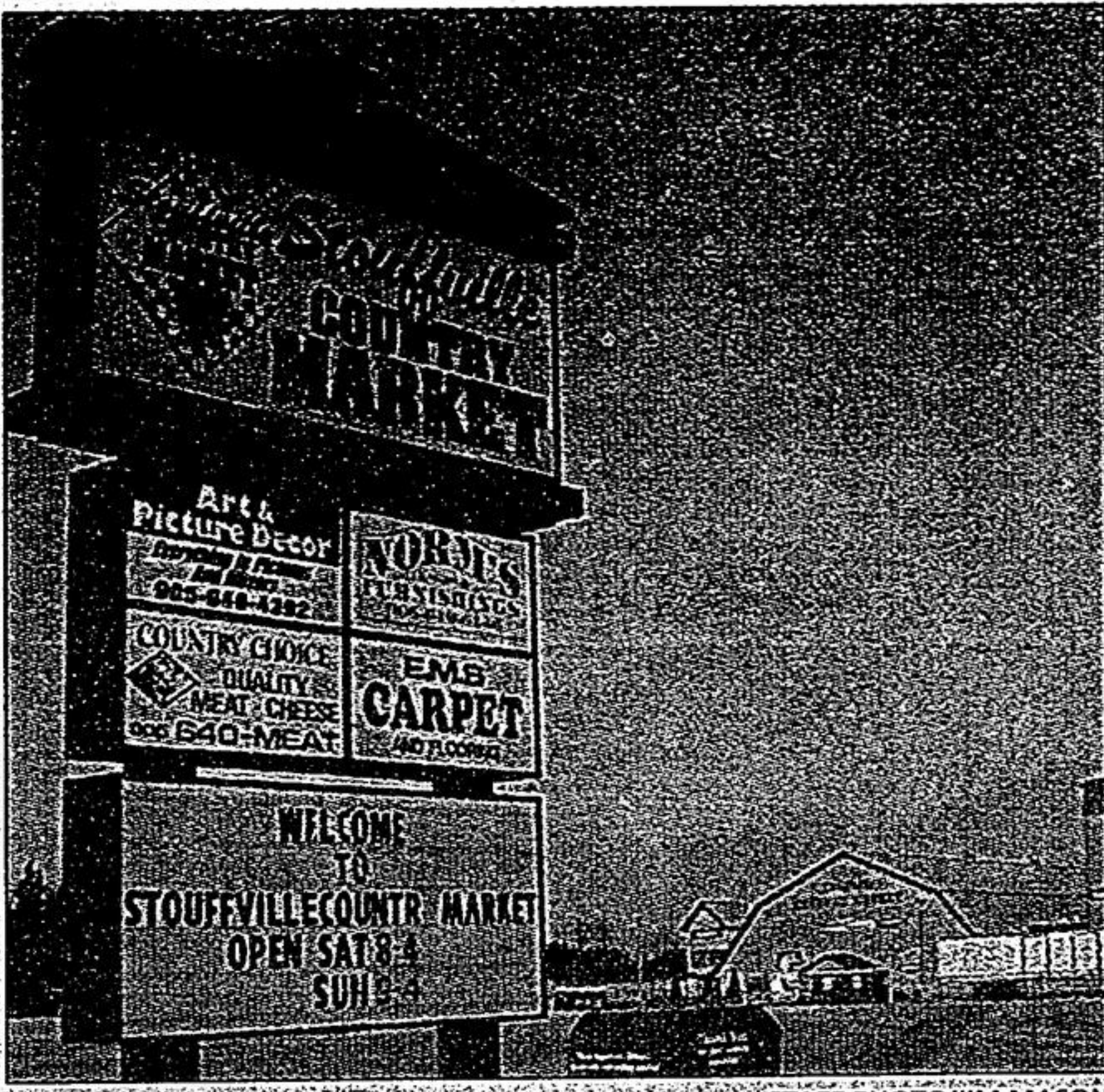
More inquiries from potential commercial and industrial clients are coming in, Mr. Cash said, because whenever a community is growing, commercial and retail want to come because the market is growing, he added.

The town provides potential businesses with information regarding such things as design and landscaping "to make sure development is first class," he said.

The town is marketing the area more aggressively by listing vacant properties and buildings on its website. The town also works with the Stouffville Business Improvement Area and the chamber when inquiries are received.

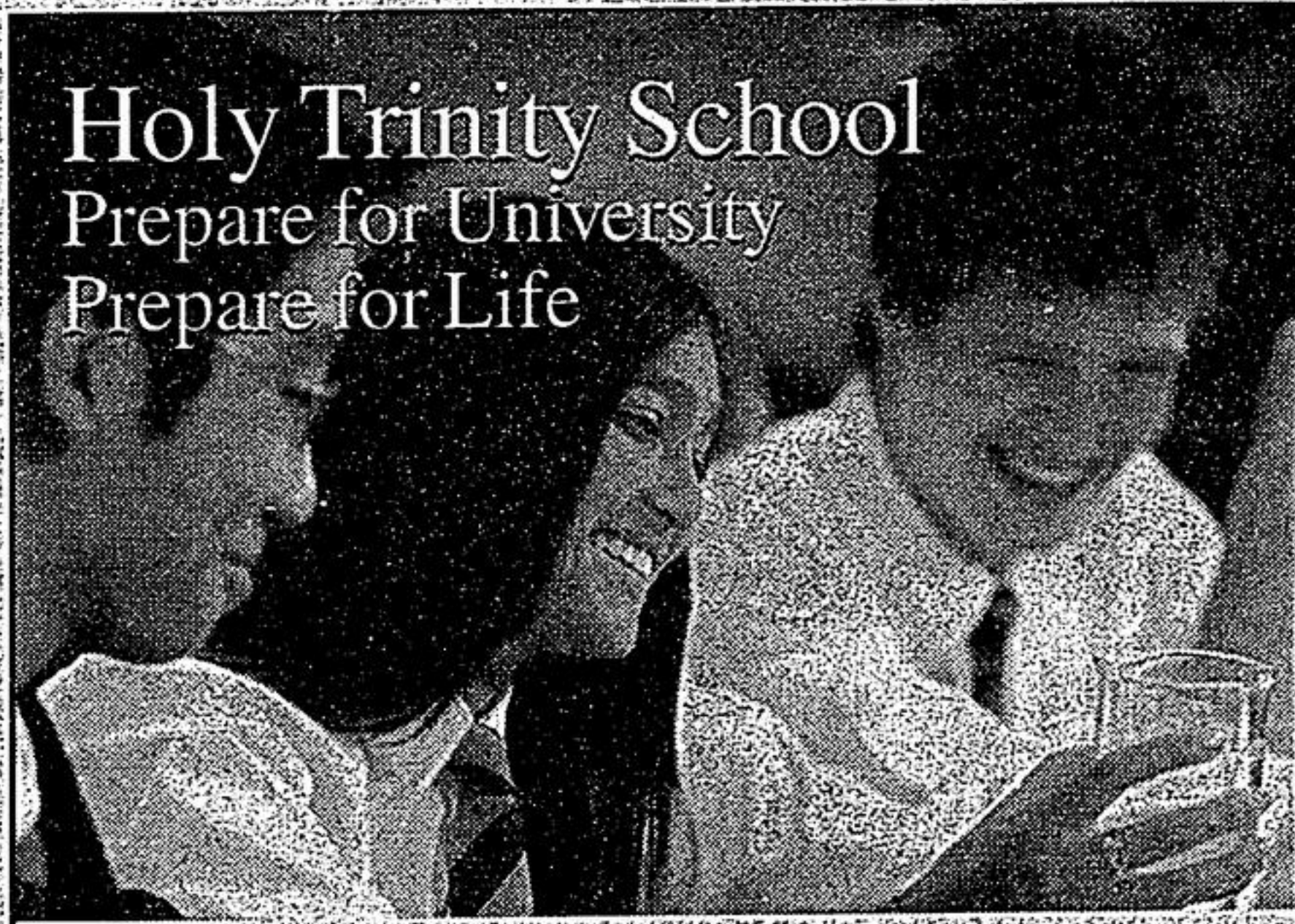
Since July, the town received 19 inquiries regarding industrial and office space, with about half still active, Mr. Cash said. Many are looking at the industrial lands near Wal-Mart.

Hooking up to the York Durham sewer system allowed for more residential, commercial and industrial development.



STAFF PHOTO/JIM MASON

Closing of the Stouffville Country Market could be extended beyond the end of 2007. Meanwhile, town officials hope to find the market a new home in the community.



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