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# Public wants downtown assisted, mayor says

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be charged to any other business wanting to build or expand in the downtown business improvement area.

The restaurant could open later

this month, town director of development services Tom Parry said.

The council decision should help to reverse a trend BIA chairperson Eric Button has seen for many years.

Business owners who want to renovate or expand their operations were

often driven away, he said, when they find out about the fees involved.

He commended the current council for its support of the downtown, saying, "It is really important for the community to make sure that the downtown doesn't die and that we

develop it in the proper way." Noting council has been challenged to support downtown revitalization, Councillor Phil Bannon said, "We have not been upfront and direct with a lot of entrepreneurs. There are a lot of hidden costs."

Councillor Rob Hargrave noted the rate of bankruptcies among small specialty businesses is extremely high and asked council, "Are we open for business to help them?"

Doing away with fees and shopping locally are two ways to make a commitment to the downtown, Mayor Wayne Emmerson said.

**'It is really important for the community to make sure that the downtown doesn't die and that we develop it in the proper way.'**

Eric Button  
 Stouffville Business Improvement Area

"We have listened to the public," Mr. Emmerson said. "They said help the downtown core, help the businesses to renovate and improve their buildings."

Other policies are in the works to assist businesses planning to improve or expand, he said.

Having such parking fees is at cross purposes with downtown revitalization, Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce president Helene Johnson said.

Council considered the findings of the Downtown Stouffville Working Group in its deliberations and praised the work of the group.

While the councillors who pushed for doing away with the fees prevailed, other councillors wanted to encourage downtown businesses, but also not saddle taxpayers with the total cost of improving parking in the area.

"The town has to support the revitalization of our downtown," Councillor Clyde Smith said, "as long as it is fiscally prudent."

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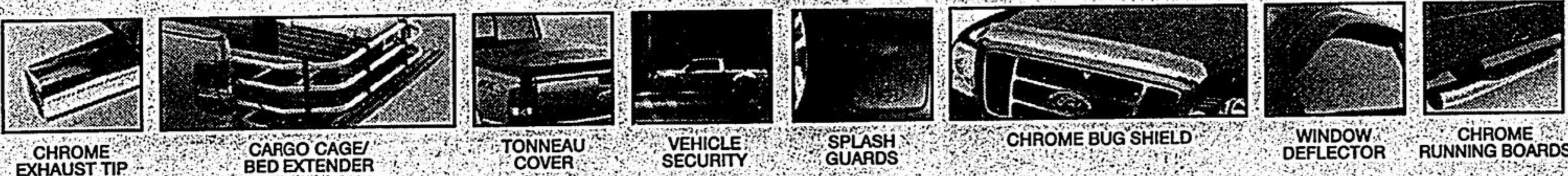
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**PHIL BANNON:** Councillor admits there are many hidden costs to setting up shop.

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