

'Well-rounded community still small': mayor

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nities are those where many people can work locally, where there is housing for a wide range of incomes and where people can engage in various forms of recreation.

The fact many churches have started to expand is the "sign of a well-rounded community", Mayor Wayne Emmerson said.

New schools, particularly Stouffville District Secondary, are also signs of a thriving community.

Whitchurch-Stouffville isn't as big as people think, Mr. Emmerson added.

It gives ample opportunity for you to meet neighbours by volunteering or taking part in service clubs, sports or other groups.

"You get to know people," Mr. Emmerson. "It makes it even better."

While it looks like subdivisions are sprouting like mushrooms, Whitchurch-Stouffville "will continue to be a small municipality", Mr. McNeely said.

The town's population makes up around three percent of York Region. By 2021, when current growth should be fairly completed, the percentage might even be lower, he said.

That's good news for those who moved to Whitchurch-Stouffville because of its small-town ambience.

Before beginning to plan the town's subdivisions, staff and members of council visited successful developments in Markham, Whitby, Brooklin, Richmond Hill and Ajax to examine their architecture and see how they blended with nearby urban and natural areas.

The planners consider individual projects, but also co-ordinate the big picture. If they didn't, you might have a road leading out of one subdivision and not meeting a nearby road as it should, Mr. Parry said.

During public meetings, residents often brought new information to the planners, which



STAFF PHOTO/BILL ROBERTS

Tom Parry (left) is Whitchurch-Stouffville's director of development services and Andrew McNeely is town planner.

they incorporated into the process. Residents talked about their experiences in other towns and other countries to see if these ideas might work here.

If you've ever wondered why that new park is in your neighbourhood, it comes down to having enough people living in the area, with most of the neighbourhood ideally within a maximum five-minute walk. Many of the parks are, or soon will be, connected by the town's trail system.

Many new neighbourhood parks, which are

usually around four or five acres in size, feature splash pads, something you were looking for. Natural features or storm ponds are incorporated into parks for a pleasing look. Features such as bridges are upgraded with decorative railings, for instance, and picnic tables are located to overlook ponds.

Parks are designed to be a meeting place for all age groups, Mr. McNeely said, for activities like basketball or baseball or simply reading on a park bench or enjoying watching children playing on the swings and climbers.

TRAILS IN TOWN

Both Mr. McNeely and Mr. Parry take particular pride in the town's trail systems. Keeping and developing the trail systems was something local politicians encouraged, in response to residents' requests. The town's secondary plan requires developers to set aside a certain amount of their land for a trail system.

When the secondary plan was in process about eight years ago, several meetings with residents were held, Mayor Wayne Emmerson said. That's where residents aired their views that as many environmental features as possible be preserved in the municipality, along with many other topics.

The trails will link up the soon-to-be-built Bethesda Park with Memorial Park, which will undergo a transformation in coming years. One part of the trail system is on the west side of Duffin's Creek. It reaches the heart of Stouffville and goes south past Hoover Park Drive to the municipality's southern extremity.

A new park on Byer's Pond Way, near Hoover Park Drive in southeast Stouffville, opened Sept. 29 and connects to the Stouffville Trail System. A second new park on Millard Street, west of Ninth Line in northeast Stouffville, connects to the Little Rouge trail system.

The town's trail systems are to be linked to key community destinations for you to walk or bike.

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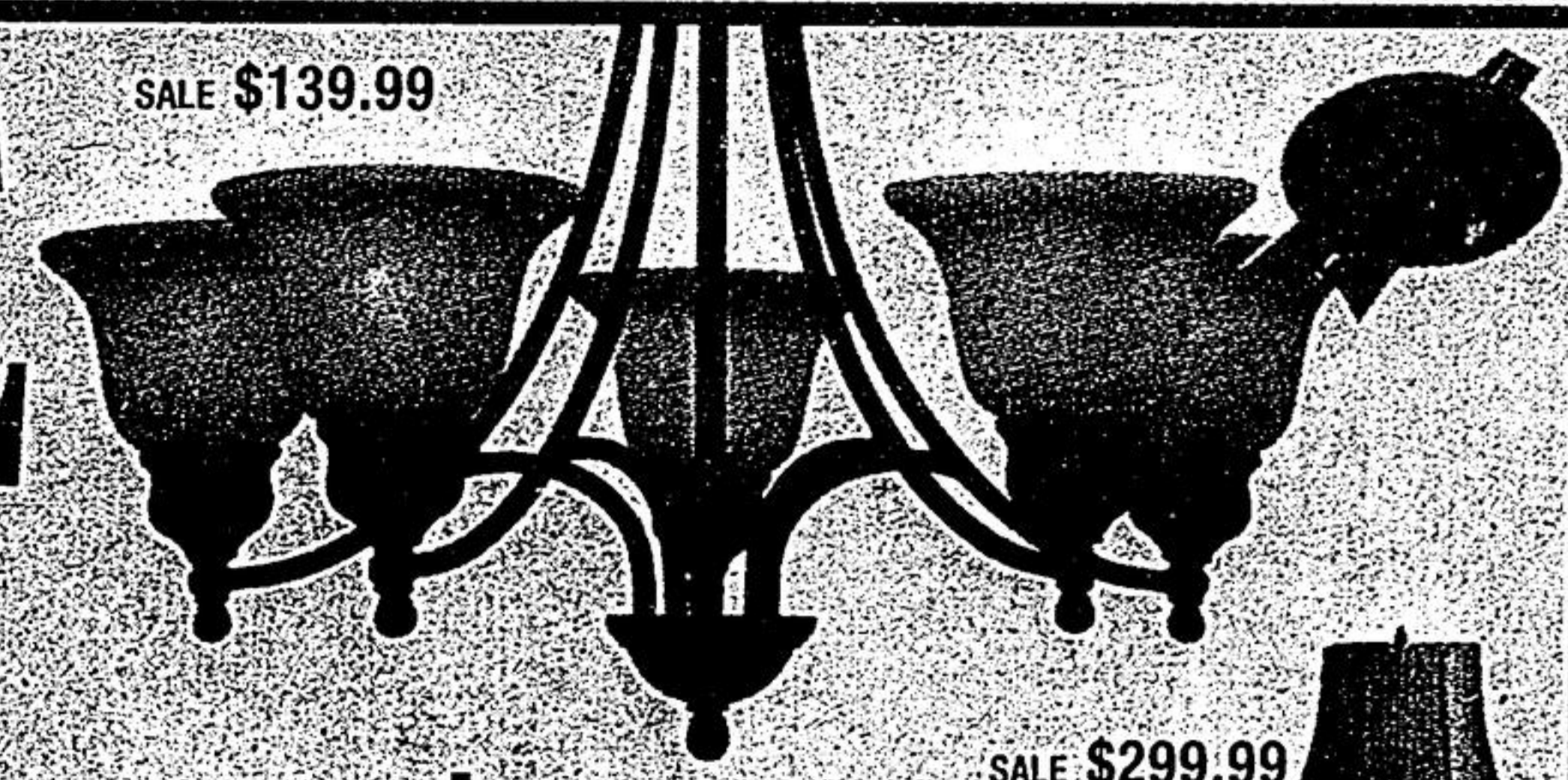
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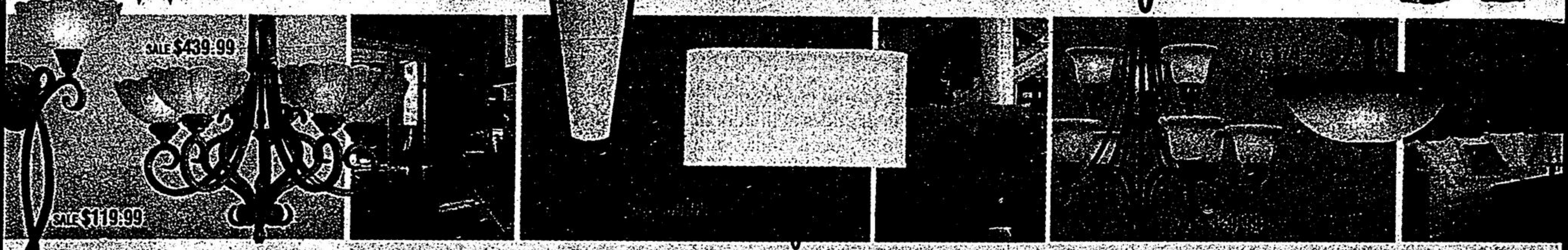


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