STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

The Stouffville Bowling Centre has been closed since last spring. A medical centre promised for the site has not materialized. Bowlers have either left the sport or taken their game to the other towns, including Uxbridge.

Town waiting on building owner

From ***page 1.***

that point I knew it was over," Mr. White said. "I left it for the four months hoping they would change their minds, but they didn't."

Mr. White was not the only person affected by the closure as there were men's, women's and children's leagues, as well as special needs league that used the facility every week.

The men's league has since disbanded, according to Mr. White, while some women are bowling in Uxbridge. For the most part, the children have abandoned the sport.

"It's basically taken an activity away from the town," Mr. White said.

The bowlers most affected by the closure are perhaps the Markham Bowlers, which is a group of about 30 special needs area residents who bowled every Sunday afternoon at the centre.

They lobbied council a year ago to keep the centre open.

The Markham Bowling Alley on Hwy. 7 has agreed to let these bowlers use their lanes on Wednesday nights, but because the lanes are in the basement, not all people can participate.

"We have some people that have some trouble going up and down the stairs," said Barb Anderson, head coach of the Markham Bowlers. One player has to go down the stairs on his backside.

"I can't tell you how much we miss (the Stouffville lanes)," Ms Anderson said, adding the Markham facility has been accommodating. "(But) we miss the homey feeling of the bowling alley in Stouffville."

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The Stouffville Bowling Centre's days became numbered early last year when Mr. Chang brought a proposal before council to change to bowling alley portion of the building at 6378 to 6388 Main St. into a medical clinic. The five second floor apartments had to also be vacated.

At the time, Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Wayne Emmerson called it a "great proposal."

As of April 2008, the town received an application for a site plan from the building's owner, but nothing more has been brought forward.

"(Mr. Chang) assured me he would let me know when things are ready to go," Mr. Emmerson said earlier this week. "He's not contacted me to say he is pulling out or doing something different."

Calls made to Mr. Chang this week were not returned.

Councillor Richard Bartley, who represents the ward where the building is located, said something needs to be done with it.

"It's starting to become an eyesore and there's a couple of businesses trying to run there (on the east side of the building)," Mr. Bartley said.

"They can leave it empty (but) we don't like to see that kind of thing," Mr. Emmerson added. "It's their building, they can with it what they want. Obviously, it's disappointing the bowling alley is closed."

- with files from Hannelore Volpe

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