

PATRONS SAY BYE TO STOUFFVILLE RD. EATERY ON WEEKEND

# No one has scooped up Ringwood diner freebie

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Mario Greco will wipe down his last table and say 'thanks for coming' for the final time tomorrow.

Da Classic Scoop is closing its doors forever as of 5 p.m. on Sunday in preparation for its eventual demolition, unless a last-minute taker for the building comes forward.

"I'm so emotional," Mr. Greco, the owner of Da Classic Scoop said. "What I'm going to miss the most is the kids — how they come in for ice cream (and say) 'please' and 'thank you.' I had a business in Toronto and you don't find that in Toronto. The 'please' and 'thank you' really touches me."

## 1950S DINER

Patrons were packing the place late in the week.

One regular customer delivered a cake for a farewell event Thursday afternoon.

The building was constructed in the 1850s and was home to a post office then a general store, until 1990 when Mr. Greco opened the eatery, which served ice cream, big breakfasts, homemade soups and hearty sandwiches.

The building also acted as a gateway into Stouffville.

It was decorated as a replica 1950s diner, complete with rock 'n' roll and automotive memorabilia.

As part of Whitchurch-Stouffville's Main Street reconstruction project, the

intersection of Main and Hwy. 48 will be realigned and Da Classic Scoop is in the way.

Two years ago, the municipality purchased land from the nearby properties owned by Mr. Greco at the intersection, but another 1,000 square metres of land was needed in order to complete the widening of Main Street and align Fockler Lane, which runs up the west side of the building, to a safer distance away from Hwy. 48.

*'It's not a hostile takeover' as claimed in a letter, Mr. Emmerson said. 'We have done our utmost to preserve this building.'*

The land required by the town is precisely where Da Classic Scoop stands.

Since 2007, the town has been trying to negotiate with Mr. Greco to have the building moved back about 100 feet from its current location, as that is as far as it needs to go to allow for the construction project.

But negotiations came to a screeching halt last year and the town initiated the expropriation process.

Last week, council approved a payment of \$655,000 to cover the cost of

lost land, the building and loss of business, plus reasonable legal costs incurred by Mr. Greco during the expropriation process.

As a last ditch effort to save the building, the town offered the two-storey, 3,600-square-foot wood frame commercial building free to anyone who would pay for the building's removal from Main Street and Hwy. 48 to a yet-to-be-determined nearby location. The town has given March 31 as its deadline to receive proposals.

"There have been no bona fide proposals for the relocation of the building," said Paul Whitehouse, Whitchurch-Stouffville's director of public works. "But there has been interest."

## POT-SHOTS AT COUNCIL

Throughout the expropriation process, members of council have been on the receiving end of pot-shots surrounding their unwillingness to save this piece of the town's heritage.

But one particular incident — an anonymous letter recently posted in the municipal building — put Mayor Wayne Emmerson on the defensive.

"It's not a hostile takeover" as claimed by that letter, Mr. Emmerson said. "We have done our utmost to preserve this building."

"I would love to see this building as a landmark in this town — if (Mr. Greco) would just move it back 100 feet."



STAFF PHOTO/JIM MASON

There has been interest but no proposals to move Da Classic Scoop from near the corner of Main Street and Hwy. 48. The town, which wants the land the diner sits on for road widening, has issued a March 31 deadline for proposals. The business is closing this weekend.

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## Manitoba mission benefits from Stouffville lunches

Stouffville's Boston Pizza will be donating 10 per cent of all Sunday lunch receipts for the month of March to the EastRidge Evangelical Missionary Church's Manitoba Mission.

Each summer, a team of young adults and youth is sent to a reserve

in northern Manitoba to provide a week of day-camp activities to the native youth on the reserve.

"The isolation, poverty and hopelessness on the reserve is unbelievable," said Scott Clubine, the associate pastor of youth ministries at EastRidge. "(The) summer camp programming offers the native youth an opportunity to do something positive during the summer."

## MP hosts free skating

Oak Ridges-Markham MP Paul Calandra is hosting free public skating sessions across his riding during March break.

The Stouffville Arena hosts an event Sunday, March 22, from 1 to 3 p.m.

For more information, call 905-883-3030.

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