

STAFF PHOTO/JIM MASON

The Savex Lotto Mart, at Main and Mill streets, was on the agenda at two meetings Monday – a tribunal hearing and the mayor's annual address to local businesses.

# Savex owner hampered by building fire, car crash

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night following a meeting in the council chambers.

The infractions include excessive growth of weeds and grass, window panes duct-taped to keep them in place, broken masonry and an inordinate amount of mould in one of the five residential units.

In the bathroom around the toilet it was "so wet and mushy that when you stood on it, it was giving," Linda Mainprize, one of Whitchurch-Stouffville's municipal bylaw enforcement officers told the appeals committee.

The fire department also has two outstanding orders of compliance on the property. One is to have the excessive amount of combustible materials removed and the second is to install a building-wide fire alarm.

Mr. Katzman appealed the September compliance order because he claimed to have done all the town has required of him.

"I'm not a criminal. ... I've got bad tenants. What am I supposed to do?" he said in an interview with The Sun-Tribune.

## WOULD FACE CHARGES

"I say it's not my fault. I've done everything I can to comply," he told the newspaper.

The municipality's appeals committee upheld the property standards compliance order as well as the order from the fire department.

"He doesn't have a choice to agree to it," said Shaen Armstrong, the committee chairperson for the meeting, in an interview with The Sun-Tribune. "Whether he agrees to it or not, is not relevant. It's the decision of the tribunal."

As part of the appeals committee's ruling, Mr. Katzman must provide municipal bylaw officers access to the entire building by Monday.

He must also co-ordinate a full inspection and provide supporting written reports by Nov. 30 from Whitchurch-Stouffville Fire and Emergency Services, York Region Public Health Unit, the Electrical Safety Authority and bylaw department. If necessary, the town's structural engineer may also be called in.

If Mr. Katzman, 78, does not comply, he will face provincial charges.

Problems with the Savex building began in 1989 when a fire ripped through one of the three second-floor apartments. It caused about \$100,000 worth of damage to the apartment, as well as the drug store's ceiling.

"I haven't been able to recoup," Mr. Katzman told The Sun-Tribune.

The building's problems were further exacerbated by a vehicle crashing into the side of it in 2010.

It caused \$60,000 worth of damage, according to Mr. Katzman, and has led to some of the property standard infractions, such as the broken masonry.

"It destroyed my whole building," he told The Sun-Tribune.

"Mr. Katzman has laid out thousands and thousands of dollars the rent doesn't even cover," his lawyer, Rivi Joel, told the appeals committee.

Mr. Katzman claims he cannot do anything with the store because of the town's building code restrictions.

"We have tried to work with him," Mr.

Emmerson told The Sun-Tribune, noting Mr. Katzman has been made aware of the downtown building improvement fund for front facades.

"We've tried to get this business cleaned up," Mr. Emmerson said in an interview.

*"I'm hoping that we win this one and maybe eventually someone will purchase that building and then take that eyesore off Main Street," Mayor Emmerson said. His comments were received with applause.*

Ms Mainprize, along with Jennifer Cooper, fire prevention/public education officer for the fire department, also noted they have tried working with Mr. Katzman.

"Our main mandate is to get compliance on the property," Ms Mainprize told the appeals committee.

While Mr. Katzman was before the tribunal, the mayor was across town giving a speech to about 80 people.

"Tonight we're trying to work on the Savex drug store. We've got them under property standards. ... I'm hoping that we win this one and maybe eventually someone will purchase that building and then take that eyesore off Main Street," he said.

His comments were received with applause.

As far as Mr. Katzman selling the building, don't count on it. "I don't think that's your business or anybody else's business what I am going to do with it," he told The Sun-Tribune when asked why he does not sell it.

"I can't force him to sell it," the mayor said.

## WAS THREE-STORE CHAIN

"I believe it could be a huge impact to the town if someone wants to purchase it and put a business in," Mr. Emmerson said, noting many people have unsuccessfully tried to buy it over the years.

Mr. Katzman, a retired pharmacist, bought the former library and Paul's Drygoods location in 1976. The drug store opened a year later.

At the time, Mr. Katzman also owned Savex locations in Markham and Unionville.

For a number of years, Mr. Katzman said he lived above the store but has subsequently moved to Toronto to be closer to the medical care he requires. It has five residential units, three upstairs and two behind the store.

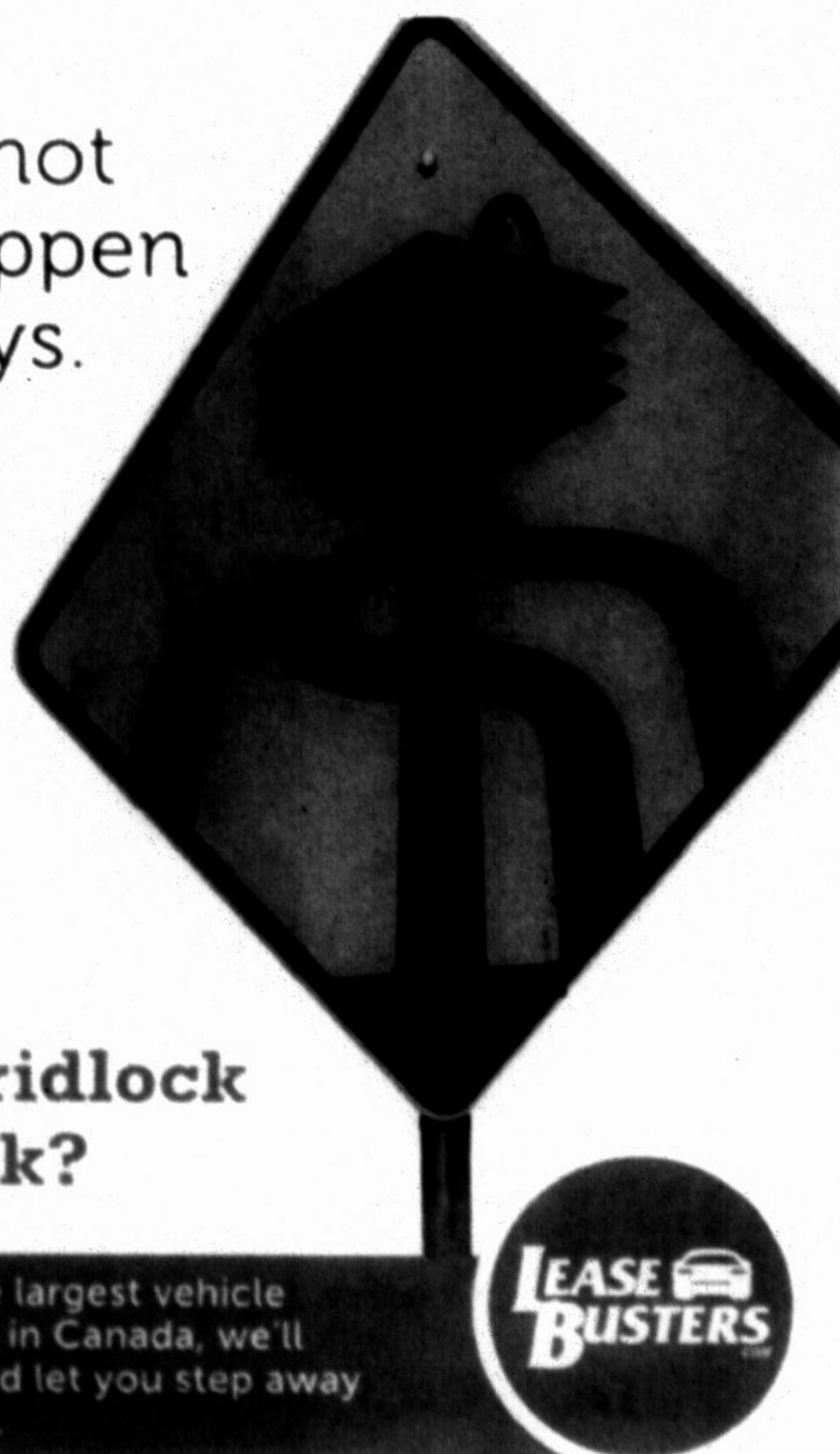
## APPEAL TO THEM

The town's appeals committee is comprised of five members of the public. Their term coincides with that of council.

On this committee is Shaen Armstrong, Carrn Bacher, Thomas Glassford, Erik Gordon and Thomas Winters.

Meetings occur on a required basis and deal with appeals for property standards, the muzzling of dogs, business licensing bylaws and second suites.

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