



Talk Of The Town

To Sled or Not To Sled

Memorial Park Plan Debate Continues

By Ben Embiricos

Few local issues have caused more anger in recent years than the long running re-development of Memorial Park in downtown Stouffville.

The removal of the old sled hill, the wood grandstand and the closure of the outdoor pool have all had large numbers of residents up in arms. Whatever your views on the changes to date though, I think that everyone can agree that the expansion of the park to include the large parcel of land to the south of the Leisure Centre is to be welcomed.

If you have visited the Leisure Centre or one of the arenas recently you may have seen the draft plans for how Memorial Park may finally look. There are two alternative drawings presented and public feedback is being requested. The Option 1 and Option 2 plans and related documents are also on the town website (see http://www.townofws.com/park_plans.asp). You will get a chance to give your views at an information evening being held by the town at Nineteen on the Park on Tuesday April 10 at 7 p.m.

The two draft plans both incorporate new play structures, a splash pad, skateboard park, basketball court and a new outdoor refrigerated ice pad to the south of the Leisure Centre.

The chief differences are that only Option 1 includes a new outdoor pool and only Option 2 envisages permanently closing Burkholder Street for the short stretch east of the Leisure Centre approach road to Park Drive. Perhaps surprisingly, given the public outcry at the loss of the old sled hill, there are no plans for a fitting replacement.

I spoke recently with councillor Rob Hargrave whose Ward 6 includes the park. In the past Councillor Hargrave has criticized some of the changes to the park. He told me though that "I think it is best to be positive now, we need to concentrate on the work

still to be done. We are hoping for some good public input."

The use of public consultations and information sessions is a governmental trend that has become increasingly widespread in recent decades. Its proponents suggest that it makes decision making more democratic. The park session in December 2011 attracted about thirty to forty members of the public. Personally, although I think public consultation exercises can be useful, they are no substitute for generally being in touch with residents. Having made a big effort to publicize the April 10 meeting, staff and council will hope more people show up this time. Protests at the time by children and widely expressed parental regret at the removal of the old toboggan hill would seem to me to be good evidence that a new hill should be on one of the draft plans at least. The existing replacement hill is at the side of the noise reduction berm to the east of the Park Drive extension. To my knowledge that hill has not been used much, with sledders instead congregating in bigger numbers at Rupert Park.

Rob Raycroft, director of Community and Leisure Services at the town, said, "There are no plans to put another sled hill in Memorial Park, but hills may be included in the plans for the park to be located behind Harry Bowes school (to be called Hillmont park) or at the new (existing) park east of Tenth Line (Sunnyridge)." Councillor Hargrave appears to consider the issue more open. "If the public tell us that they want a new sled hill in Memorial Park then I think that council should look at that."

Any residents who would like to comment on the Memorial Park plan but are unable to attend the April 10 meeting are invited by council to comment by phone or e-mail Rob Raycroft at rob.raycroft@townofws.com.

A Lyrical Tribute To Poetry Month

In This World

By Natasha Hayward

Trees sway, sun warms.
Hearts pound, doubt forms.

Buds bloom, boughs break.
Tears fall, hearts ache.

Ice melts, tides swirl.
Lungs heave, thoughts whirl.

Grass grows, birds fly.
People kill, people die.

Leaves turn, wind blows.
Glass breaks, blood flows.

Rain drips, flames glow.
Chains clank, scars show.

Smiles fade
Waves churn
Skulls crack
Forests burn

Flowers wilt
Life drains
Lightning strikes
Chaos reigns

In this world, this land of woe,
You may find both friend and foe.

This poem was written by 15-year-old Natasha Hayward as part of the Stouffville Reading & Creative Writing Club that aims at helping children and youth develop an interest in reading and writing. For enquiries, call Kinjal Dagli-Shah on 905-591-1797 or email at kinjal.dagli@gmail.com.

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Mennonite Central Committee



Kathleen Kenna To Speak At Christ Church - Former Star reporter special guest at spring event

At a wine and cheese reception on Friday, April 13 at 7:30 p.m. in the Great Hall at Christ Church Anglican, Kathleen Kenna will speak on The Importance of Forgiveness in War and Peace.

The former Toronto Star reporter was severely wounded in an attack in Afghanistan on March 4, 2002. Ms Kenna, her husband Hadi Dadashion, photographer Bernard Weil and their Afghan driver were en route from Kabul to Gardez, when a grenade was thrown into their car, exploding beneath the

journalist's seat.

Ms Kenna left her job at the Star as a result of the many injuries she sustained in the attack, and became a visiting scholar at Berkeley, University of California in 2004. She continued her studies in rehabilitation counseling and now works with homeless and disabled veterans in San Francisco, helping them come to terms with their disabilities.

In an article in the March 4, 2012 Toronto Star, Ms Kenna said that her strong faith in God has kept her opti-

mistic. "I was near-suicidal for some time because of pain and disability, so offered a simple daily prayer to hang on: One. Small. Thing," she wrote.

To read the complete article, in which she writes movingly about 10 things she discovered from her experience of near death, visit www.thestar.com/news/insight/article/1140247.

For tickets and information on the April 13 event, call Ken Prentice at 905-642-9507. Proceeds from the evening will help cover costs for a youth mission trip to a developing company.



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