

Letters

Sign by-law exemption request gives rise to future concerns

To the Editor:

The other day whilst perusing the town website, I noticed that a local business had recently applied for an exemption to the town's sign bylaw. Well, I was initially surprised by this request. Not so much by the application for the exemption, but by the fact that there indeed is a sign bylaw they could be exempted from. I mean we've all seen the western end of Main Street. The amount and diversity of signs make that area look like something out of the movie *Blade Runner*. By the looks of things down there one would quickly surmise that we in fact don't have a bylaw to regulate signs. And if we did, one might conclude that the bylaw would read something like "Put up any kind of sign you damn well please, because we don't give a rat's patootie what the town looks like". Actually, that's not the case; the town is the proud possessor of a sign regulatory ordinance.

But when I read the actual sign document, I was shocked. Not because the bylaw does not say anything but that, as a matter of fact, it goes on at considerable length describing what is allowed and what isn't.

What is shocking is that the bylaw still somehow manages to enable our town to look like a Boxing Day sale at a Keswick dollar store. I was shocked that a seemingly complex and well-crafted bylaw could allow the kind of visual pandemonium found on our streets.

Now an exemption can be defined as something that is contrary to the bylaw. And if that is the case, one could only hope that what they were after was the right to put up a sign that is tasteful, unobtrusive, and does not contain fluorescent colours not normally found in nature. Unfortunately, that is also not the case.

What the business owners were asking for was a sign that is larger than the bylaw currently allows. It seems that the proponent had little interest in the subtlety allowed by a 50 or 100 square foot sign, but for some inexplicable reason needs considerably more sign area than that to inform potential patrons of the existence of the business in question. I would have thought that the best way to attract people is not to hide all the businesses behind a wall of signs, so that the anticipated customers could actually find

the place. But what do I know?

But I do feel sorry for the bylaw enforcement people. The bylaw itself must be hard enough to enforce, what with all the different sections and subsections, provisions and provisos, whereas, therefore and notwithstanding and such.

If council continues to add a whole bunch of exemptions and variances to it every time somebody has the gumption to ask, the bylaw pretty much becomes totally unenforceable, because it is muddled up to the point of being unintelligible. Unless of course, that is the intention.

Oh well, it could be worse. I'm just glad they weren't asking to put up some huge inflated balloon creation on the roof to celebrate another grand opening. That big coffee cup on the new Country Style looked like some sort of caffeinated aliens had crash-landed on the roof. We should thank our lucky stars a proctologist hasn't decided to open a new clinic on main street. I just cringe thinking about the kind of inflatable council might approve.

Hugo T. Kroon
Bethesda



Eric Button and Bill Johnston share a laugh at the Stouffville District Secondary School Reunion held July 2nd weekend.

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