

WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE THIS MONTH

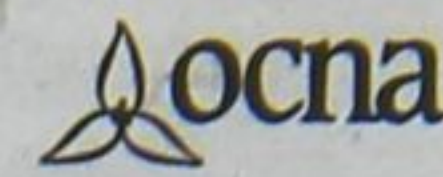
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whitchurch Stouffville this Month

LOCAL NEWS VIEWS HAPPENINGS

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Opinion

Seeking to slow down

As the Aug. 24 meeting in Town Council chambers wore on, one thing became pretty obvious to those of us in the spectators' gallery. A lot of those elected folks up there were scared, downright scared, of what they'd gotten themselves into. What they were particularly scared of was a little document entitled "Long Term Fiscal Impact Assessment of Growth", prepared by a group of economists at Council's direction. The paper came up near to last on the night's agenda, but in fact its contents had flavoured the debate for a good deal of the evening.

In summary, the paper looks at the impact on the town of three growth scenarios over the next decade. In the case of developers only building 100 units per year, for an annual population increase of about 400, the effect on the tax rate and on the debt (currently less than 1% of our annual revenues) would be negligible. However, if we grow by 575 units per year (which is what town planners forecast) or even worse, by 1,000 units (which would see developers build all their approved subdivisions by 2014), the effect would be devastating. Taxpayers could see their levy go up by 3% every year of the decade, and the Town debt could soar to almost 20% of revenues, amounting to tens of millions of dollars.

Now the average Joe or Jane probably is under the delusion that development is good for local coffers. In the long run, or at a measured pace, that's probably true, but if it happens too quickly, the Town gets buried under all the infrastructure it has to provide. And what's clear is that the developers here can build at any rate they darn well please.

Or can they? Using terms like "shocking" and "depressing", councillors asked staff to advise them on their legal ability to control or manage this Town's growth. In the meantime, they fret.

A municipality needing legal advice on whether it can properly manage its own growth. A sad commentary. But it looks like there'll need to be some heavy negotiations with developers if disaster is to be averted. Butting heads with developers seemed to be a theme Aug. 24, whether from citizens on Rose Avenue or in Ballantrae or on the board of the Parkview Home, who saw their plea for tax relief dashed on the rocks of fear.

As an insightful 14-year-old resident notes on page 16, past councils appear to have made a deal with the devil, and now Mayor Sherban and her troops are being stabbed with the horns.

In closing, we'd like to reassure our loyal readers and advertisers who have expressed to us their concern about the future of this newspaper. When Metroland execs purchased this and our sister publication *Newmarket This Month* in late July, it was in part because they respected what we were trying to do.

So if you read *Whitchurch-Stouffville This Month*, you will continue to find entertaining and enlightening stories about people, places and events in this community, and only this community. If you advertise with us, you will continue to enjoy exceptional service, and reach a very targeted audience.

One of the best aspects of this paper over the last three years has been the lively dialogue among our readers: articulate, concerned citizens who continually deluge us with an avalanche of letters. So if you would like to help assure the continued health of *WS This Month*, you need only do three things: read us, write us, and buy an ad or two! And thanks, Whitchurchers/Stouffvillians, for your continued support.

Letters

Terry's team keeps growing

Dear Editor,

My name is Keith Acton and two years ago I was diagnosed with testicular cancer. One of the first calls I received was from Roger Neilson, a fellow NHL coach and friend who lost his battle with cancer in 2003. He said, "Keith, welcome to the team."

I must say I was really taken back by this statement

because this was not a team I had any aspirations to ever play on. I wondered what my teammates would be like, I wasn't sure I'd like my teammates, and I was quite sure none of them were winners. So I decided I was not going to play on this team.

I guess this was that denial period I was going through. But God decided, "Keith, you don't have any choice, you are

going to play on this team."

I found out it was the best damn team I ever played on. My teammates were the most courageous, caring, loving, dedicated and committed group of individuals I had ever played with. I also found out every one of them was a winner.

When I first heard the

see page 15

Sounding Off

Our question this month, asked on a sunny morning in Franklin Park:

"What is your favourite Ontario bird?"



Cindy Watson:
 "The Baltimore Oriole that's come to our feeder this year. He's such a beautiful colour, and I haven't seen one for years."



Ken Simpson:
 "We've seen two or three wild turkeys in our backyard this summer, and that's really rare. At first I thought it was a big roadrunner."



Alana Simpson:
 "I like the blue heron, it's so big but so pretty, too. We even had one in our backyard, and my cat Magic was chasing it. That was funny."



Dawn Mossop:
 "I love the hummingbirds, they're so beautiful and delicate. We have tons of them at our feeders; I get to watch them every day at breakfast."



Ed Mewett:
 "The cardinal, particularly in the winter against the snow. The way things are going, we might get to see that pretty soon."