

BALSAM WOODS

Former battleground rings with sales pitch

By JOHN STEWART

The families who have moved into Balsam Woods, on the west side of Port Credit just north of Lakeshore Road may not know it, but they are living on the site of an historical battleground.

There were no famous military exchanges at the spot and no heroics staged there will be found in the history books. But the 27-acres of property were the site of the anguished last stand of the ratepayers of Port Credit and the former Port Credit town council.

The story is a long and tortuous one, filled with tears, spite, resignations and marches on town halls. Always, it is accompanied by the ringing rhetoric of confrontation.

The land was zoned for high rise apartment development by Port Credit in the late 1960s and the Ontario Municipal Board later approved the zoning.

The drama that has resulted in the 384 townhouses now under construction really began in the spring of 1973 when then-owner, Carlton Holdings Limited, applied to Port Credit for a rezoning to allow stacked townhouses.

SEEK ALTERNATIVE

Shortly after, due to the concern of many residents of Port Credit, an ad hoc advisory committee to council was established, with representatives of the planning committee, council and the town's ratepayer association. They were to work out an alternative to the proposed 685 condominium stacked townhouses.

When a draft bylaw for the stacked townhouses was given two readings by town council, which was prone to high density as a trip through downtown Port Credit will confirm to this day, a howl of protest arose.

Citizen activists, including Hubert Wolf who was later to become a town and city councillor, organized a protest march on Clarke Hall. Over 100 people showed up carrying placards. While the police and fire marshal looked on, groups of residents were let into the building to address their councillors, who suspended their normal role not to allow citizens to address general committee.

COUNCIL UNDER FIRE

Referring to secret negotiations which had taken place between council and the developer, resident Chris Mackie said "you have shown complete contempt for public involvement." He told councillors they should resign and let the province have control until regional government took over.

David Ottman said, "this council has lost the respect of the town." Councillors knew their function was to end in only a few months time when Port Credit and Mississauga would be amalgamated.

Frank Rigler, in a tearful address, resigned from the ad hoc committee "to devote my time to the town."

Mayor Cy Saddington, under fire from all sides, protested that "we do not have secret meetings but some things must be discussed privately."

Residents didn't trust council. Stories in the local press revealed that Carlton had been discouraged in February of 1973 from trying to build semi-detached homes. An unidentified town staff member was quoted in the press saying that, "no community ever benefited from those things."

Resident Helen Battye told council that "the developer's rights are not divine and the rights of the community must supercede his rights."

Mayor Saddington replied that "it is council's duty to develop that land to the best of our ability."

Two members of the planning board, including the chairman, resigned as a result of council's dealing with the bylaw without first presenting it to the board. Russ Wilson, one of those who resigned, protested that the planning board shouldn't be bypassed. "Why waste our time with a farce?" he wondered.

COMPROMISE REACHED

Eventually a compromise agreement acceptable to the developers and residents was worked out. The plan called for low rise apartment buildings, a total population of 1,530 people, a senior citizens' development and a small neighborhood shopping facility. For various reasons, the compromise agreement was never to come to fruition, a fact regretted by almost everyone involved.

According to Chris Mackie it was the failure of the Port Credit planning board to act on the compromise which doomed it. For whatever reasons, the matter never went before the board, which was now without the two members who were most concerned with the development.

"Finally Carlton Holdings, and I must say I don't blame them one little bit, finally became very concerned about the onset of regional government and they applied in late November of 1973 for a building permit for 716 apartment units under the original high rise zoning."

RESOLVE TO FIGHT

With the abundance of high density residential development already in Port Credit and the danger of creating a "domino" effect by allowing a high rise on the first property along the Lakeshore area west of Port Credit, the ratepayers resolved to fight against the high rise. They would have to wait until the reform council just elected in Mississauga, partially on an anti-high rise platform, could take office.

Early in 1974 Carlton Holdings sold its land, with the high rise permit on it, to Victoria Woods, Paramount Developments and another company.

Ron Searle, then a councillor and now the mayor of Mississauga, says the compromise was foiled because a meeting of the council-elect failed to endorse the compromise. The new councillors, the reform majority, didn't feel they should make any decisions prior to taking office according to Searle. "Carlton Holdings saw which way the wind was blowing and sold the property to Victoria Woods with a building permit."

TOWNHOUSES NEGOTIATED

Through the early months of 1974 negotiations went on between various councillors and the land owners. According to Searle, then mayor Martin Dobkin and his assistant Dr. Gordon Watt negotiated the townhouse development which is now on the land. "What you see is what they negotiated," he says.

The issue culminated in May of 1974 in a public meeting of planning committee and a special council meeting. At the end of a grinding five-hour session, then Port Credit councillor Hubert Wolf stood alone as council approved the townhouse development, with a flourish of regretful speeches.

Councillor Bud Gregory said "every one of us has searched their hearts and souls to try and reach a compromise but we can't do anything about it."

Councillor David Culham voted for the development with "tremendous regret." But he said council couldn't undo the wrongs of yesterday.

ANTICIPATED CONTROVERSY

Councillor Mary Helen Spence said "we have to accept the best of two very bad situations. I have to make a decision and live with it for the rest of my term of office." Mrs. Spence anticipated the controversy.

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PUBLIC NOTICE
Applications will be accepted from Mississauga residents interested in filling a vacancy on the COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENT AND THE REGION OF PEEL LAND DIVISION COMMITTEE
City Council will appoint the successful applicant to a three year term — 1977 through 1979.
It is suggested that persons wishing to submit their names for this position contact the Secretary-Treasurer of the Committee of Adjustment (279-7600 Ext. 288) to ascertain the nature of the position and its general responsibilities.
Applications must be submitted to the attention of
Mr. Terence Julian
City Clerk
City of Mississauga
1 City Centre Drive
Mississauga L5B 1M2
no later than Friday, January 28th, 1977.
6776

It was unanimously agreed to continue with the planning and recreation committees. A motion to change the composition from four citizens and five councillors on planning to five citizens and four councillors lost 9-1, with only Kennedy in favor.

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The recycling committee was also dropped. Its job has essentially been completed. If council adopts its report on recycling depots in its capital budget, the committee will likely be reconstituted.

Committees which will continue on the same basis in 1977 are the condominium committee, the taxicab authority, the street names committee, the Mississauga-Oakville and Mississauga-Etobicoke liaison committees, the traffic safety council, the library board, the architectural conservation committee and the property standards committee.

Pair committed to trial

Two men charged with murder in connection with the beating death of a 71-year-old Lakeshore Road man have been committed for trial following a preliminary hearing in provincial court.

Bryan John Reynolds, 25, of 2106 Hurontario St., and Sheldon Paul Clarkson, 35, of Colborne, Ont. will be tried before an Ontario Supreme Court jury, probably in March.

They were arrested by the Peel homicide squad five months after the body of John Potter, 71, was found in his shabby cabin at 756 Lakeshore Rd. E. lying in a pool of blood. A post-mortem examination indicated Potter had been bludgeoned to death.

Reynolds is being defended by Brampton lawyer Robert Callaghan. Clarkson is represented by William Mackie, the lawyer who defended sex slayer Henry Williams of Streetsville.

The presiding judge ordered a ban on publication of the evidence presented.

Staff feels citizens ignored in decision

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Two separate issues council dealt with: whether the administration committee was valuable to the city and whether citizens should participate on committees.

As far as citizen participation is concerned, "it all depends on the bent of the particular council," explained Petryniak. "Some feel citizens can add to the process and others feel they were elected to make the decisions."

But the citizen member also felt that the people on his committee were professionals in their own right who initiated program reviews which would not otherwise have been undertaken by Mississauga. "In some cases, these were things that staff tried to initiate, but which council was not giving a hearing."

Examples of policy initiation by administration and finance citizen members include the review of the public affairs function; the establish-

ment of the commission on ward boundaries and salaries of elected officials; the salary increase restrictions; budget guidelines and the review of the personnel department.

Petryniak said he understood that City Manager Frank Markson would be concerned about streamlining the city hall committee system. "He has a real problem because there are only limited resources and there are quite a few committees which require quite a bit of staff time."

"I certainly understand his viewpoint," added the Ward 6 resident. "The more committees there are, the more work there is. That can sometimes be detracting from the main purpose which is the running of the city."

Petryniak felt that both the previous council's belief in citizen advisory groups and the present council's decision to take the initiative itself were legitimate viewpoints "depending on your perspective."

Two committees abolished as part of 'streamlining'

Continued from page A1

themselves to the public. We put our necks on the line and we should be doing more of the job. We should rely on our own expertise and common sense and our great staff."

The new Ward 4 councillor, Larry Taylor, praised the increase in citizen involvement in local government over the last three years.

"The public had an opportunity to come before the committees as issues were raised and have some input," he said. "If it slowed things down, it was only to the extent that better information was gathered to make a rational comment to council."

Taylor felt that if some committees were eliminated, general committee would simply be "overburdened" with additional work. Councillor Terry Butt of Ward 7 said that citizen participation is "fantastic" as demonstrated by the election. But after meeting with department heads and hearing Markson's recommendation, he felt that if councillors did their homework, citizen participation on committees is unnecessary. "I can't see the rationale for citizen participation when we were elected to represent the voters."

It was not an "either-or" proposition for Ward 3 Councillor Frank Bean. He didn't feel citizen participation should be thrown out, but if streamlining is necessary, administration and finance was the most logical casualty, he indicated. But he shared the concern that the workload of general committee might stymie council.

Mayor Ron Searle spoke in favor of the streamlining, although he was acting as chairman and did not vote later. Council shouldn't confuse citizen participation and citizen appointees, he urged.

Searle argued that citizen appointees were less accountable to the public than councillors. "True citizen participation in its purest form comes through a vote or membership in a citizen group — homeowners association, etc.," he said.

But Searle wanted to see a citizen chairman of the planning committee, as was done in previous years with the planning board.

"If we really believe in citizen participation, we

should be putting these people in positions of authority," he said, "not just paying lip service."

If the four policy advisory committees stick to major policy items only and don't get involved in the day-to-day running of the city as they have been doing, the system can work, maintained Streetsville Councillor Hazel McCallion.

She favored deferral so new members could study the Stevenson and Kellogg staff management study done in 1974 and so that the actual costs of the committee system could be detailed by staff.

Mrs. Spence claimed that new members weren't aware of the number of issues initiated through citizen participation.

She maintained that both administration and finance and the physical services committee did some "marvellous work."

She said the committees initiated such issues as a zero runoff policy, a reorganization of the city's public affairs department, upgrading of the swimming pool bylaw, and review of the city's personnel program.

"A lot of these things would not have been researched to the extent they were if they were dealt with by general committee," she said.

Councillor Frank McKechnie of Malton said he was afraid of the "wholesale slaughter" which seemed to be contemplated. He suggested the city try the old system on a trial basis, an idea later rejected by councillors.

City Engineer William Taylor supported the abolition of the physical services committee, saying his department had to hunt around for material for agendas many times. He added that it was "strictly my opinion" that it should be dropped.

The city manager said the administration and finance committee could do very good work if it weren't for limited resources. He felt another approach to the function could be more successful.

By a 5-4 margin, each of the committees was eliminated. In favor in both votes were Councillors Kennedy, Bean, Hooper, Butt and Leavers. Opposed were Councillors Spence, Taylor, McKechnie and McCallion.

Board chairman named

By GREG SNOW

Ward 3 trustee Phil Catalano has been elected chairman of the Dufferin-Peel Separate School Board after a draw from a hat to break a tie vote.

Catalano, beginning his third term as trustee, defeated Robert Hall, chairman for the past seven years.

The secret ballot vote ended with an 8-8 tie. Two ballots were placed in a hat, one with the word 'chairman' on it, and the other blank. The candidates drew from the hat after which Catalano was declared chairman.

"I am thoroughly surprised, I just thought I would like to make it a competition so I let my name stand in nomination," Catalano said.

Hall, a retired businessman who is the Orangeville representative on the board, appeared disappointed by the outcome but said he didn't think there were any particular issues which had led to his defeat.

"I think in a closely knit group like this, many people thought it was just time for a change, to let someone else try the job," he said.

The vote also seemed unexpected to many of the other trustees.

"It really surprised half of us for sure," one remarked in reference to the tie vote.

Ward 5 trustee Steve Wrabko said he was quite surprised in light of the fine job he said Hall had done.

Catalano began his chairmanship by turning his attention immediately toward the budget.

"This year the budget is the number one point of emphasis," he said. "I'd not only like to see it gone over with a fine tooth comb but I'd like to see it broken down into parts and then examined. Hopefully we will be able to make some changes this year."

The 1976 budget stands near the \$26 million mark and an increase of at least eight per cent is expected.

Betty Biss was elected to serve as the board's vice-chairman. Ironically, because of another tie vote, her election was also determined by a draw.

Biss, the trustee from Ward 4 ran against Wally Metson.

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Selon l'article 256 de la loi scolaire (1974) et suivant une directive des contribuables de la région, le Conseil Scolaire de Peel se propose de continuer à pourvoir aux besoins de la communauté francophone en permettant la fondation d'un comité consultatif de langue française.

Ce comité comprendra neuf membres comme suit:
(i) trois conseillers scolaires désignés par le Conseil Scolaire de la région de Peel,
(ii) six contribuables francophones qui ne sont pas membres du Conseil Scolaire de Peel mais qui ont été élus au comité de langue française par les contribuables francophones de la région de Peel.

La durée des fonctions de ce comité est concurrente avec celle des conseillers scolaires jusqu'au moment où un nouveau Conseil soit élu et organisé.

Afin d'éclaircir ce comité une réunion publique aura lieu, mercredi, le 19 janvier, 1977
20:00 heures
T. L. Kennedy Secondary School,
(274-1231)
3100, rue Hurontario
Mississauga, Ontario

Tous, contribuables francophones et personnes intéressées de la région de Peel, sont invitées.

R. Lagerquist J. A. Fraser
Chairman of Board Director of Education

PUBLIC NOTICE
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED QUEENSWAY EXTENSION FROM CAWTHRA ROAD TO HWY. 10.
PUBLIC MEETING MONDAY JANUARY 17th

An assessment of the potential environmental impact of the QUEENSWAY EXTENSION is being conducted for the regional municipality of Peel. Topics of investigation include noise pollution, air quality, community severance, aesthetics and biological concerns.

You are invited to attend a public meeting on Monday January 17th at 8 p.m. in the cafeteria of Camilla Road Public School, 201 Tedwyn Drive, Mississauga.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the contents of the study and to identify community concerns.

For further information please contact:
Gail Ferguson,
Ecologists Limited,
133 Wynford Drive, Don Mills.
429-3411