

A political point of view

The truth about land negotiations



Mayor Brian Jackson

**Brian Jackson
Mayor, Town of Innisfil**

There has been great confusion with some of our residents concerning the Barrie/Innisfil land negotiations. To better understand the process and the final outcome of the negotiations, it is first important to have a clear understanding of the background.

In order to move forward with its objective of servicing the Highway 400/Innisfil Heights corridor, council passed a resolution in June 2005 in response to the ongoing Innisfil Heights Servicing Environmental Assessment Study. That resolution asked the City of Barrie to enter into discussions with the town to extend services to

the area encompassed by the EA. The servicing strategy was the preferred solution to the EA as recommended by the town's technical steering committee.

The intention of the town at the time was to pursue a financial arrangement for the capital and operating cost associated with the extension of services from the city. A response letter from Barrie to the Innisfil initiative was received in December 2005, resulting in council concurring with the suggestion of the City of Barrie that the assistance of the Office of the Provincial Development Facilitator (OPDF) be engaged to further the informal dialog that had focused on this key employment corridor.

The OPDF accepted the request of the municipality, and Terms of Reference were subsequently prepared and adopted by the councils of both municipalities. Each municipality then appointed a negotiating committee to represent their interest and with the assistance of Alan Wells, the provincial development facilitator, a number of meetings were convened to endeavour to fulfill the objectives of the

accepted Terms of Reference. Participating in the discussions were representatives of the OPDF and the two municipalities.

County of Simcoe representatives attended the formal sessions as observers and staff from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, together with OPDF and Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, also participated in the dialog. The formal negotiating committee structure was supplemented with a technical resource committee, comprising a number of disciplines of expertise that met throughout the process, sharing information and collaborating to create common denominators that assisted the work of the negotiating committees.

As the process unfolded from inception, the Intergovernmental Action Plan for Simcoe County, a joint, cooperative study undertaken with four provincial ministries, the County of Simcoe, the separated cities of Barrie and Orillia and all the constituent lower tier municipalities in the county was completed.

As well, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe was released by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal. This document contains specific population thresholds that the separated cities and the county must adhere to as they undertake future planning. The town also completed and adopted its new Official Plan and, in an effort to clearly indicate to others, gave first reading to the results of its own Growth Management Study in the form of Official Plan Amendment 1. All of the foregoing actions have either directly and/or indirectly influenced the original objectives as stated by council, which were focused on creation of a serviced employment area along the 400 corridor for the benefit of the citizens of Innisfil in particular and, more broadly, those in the county as well. The process recently concluded with the Innisfil committee making the determination that the discussions should cease.

Part of Innisfil's goal for the negotiations was a balance of land that would be serviced in Innisfil in exchange for lands sought

by Barrie for development expansion. In other words, one hectare of land in Innisfil would be serviced in exchange for one developable hectare added to Barrie. Recent strict planning interpretation by the provincial representatives during the discussion sessions and a suggestion that a three for one hectare exchange of land occur in the favour of Barrie was not reasonable in the committee's view. The negotiating committee who kept council apprised through the entire process agreed, and on March 19th they decided to formally terminate the discussions. Also included in the Terms of Reference, the discussions would remain confidential and that any deal would be fully disclosed to the public.

Without question, the proposed deal was not in the best interest of the residents

of Innisfil. Development costs would have made the land in Innisfil unaffordable and would have furthered Barrie's continued growth objectives without that critical balance that would benefit Innisfil and the county as a whole being achieved.

Council has recently decided to seek an alternative solutions to service the 400 employment corridor, using the town's current infrastructure. It is hoped that one of the alternatives to be studied proves viable and we can move forward with council's number one priority, creating jobs for the benefit of the people in our community and the entire county.

This article was written, in part, using the staff report written by the town's Chief Administrative Officer on March 19. That document is available on the town's website at www.innisfil.ca.

A party being planned for the New Town Hall

By Chris Simon

The party planning is underway at the New Town Hall.

Innisfil council passed a

plan to create a committee that will be responsible for planning the official opening ceremonies for the New Town Hall. As part of the

plan, mayor Brian Jackson, deputy mayor Gord Wauchope and councillor Peter Kmet will participate in the committee.

Along with staff, the committee will plan activities and other aspects of the ceremony, and recommend a budget for the

festivities.

Church Directory

Baha'i Faith - Innisfil.....431-7139
 Bell Ewart Baptist456-3334
 Christ Church - St. Jude Anglican, Ivy...458-9631
 Church of God Worship Centre, Thornton
705-730-1738
 Churchill United456-4692
 Cookstown United458-9701
 Gifford United456-4692
 Holland Marsh Christian Reformed775-7291
 Exaltation of the Holy Cross705-730-7999
 Ukrainian Church www.holocrossbarrie.ca
 Holy Martyrs Roman Catholic.....775-2065
 Holy Trinity Lutheran775-3412
 Innisfil Community436-1611
 Lefroy United456-2098
 www.lefroyunited.ca
 Living Faith Presbyterian Church....705-424-0779
 New Life Fellowship Baptist436-5413
 St. George's Anglican, Utopia.....458-9631
 St. James United, Stroud436-5225
 St. John Vianney726-8007
 St. John's Anglican, Cookstown.....458-1801
 www.stjohnscookstown.org
 St. Paul's Anglican, Coulsen's Hill775-3648
 St. Paul's Anglican, Stroud722-7755
 St. Peter's Anglican, Churchill.....456-4396
 www.stpeterschurchill.org
 Stroud Presbyterian721-0134
 Trinity United, Thornton458-9701

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