

HOME: Still time for discussion, says mayor

Continued from FRONT
 "I'm confident that I speak for long time residents of Innisfil, many of whom trace their backgrounds to the founding families of Innisfil," she said. "We must express enormous disappointment at the council and heritage committee's disrespect for two historic homes in Alcona.

"A community without an identity is nothing; the McConkey's were founding members of Innisfil, and their descendants have con-

tinued to contribute to this community."

The preservationists want council to impose a three month Stay of Execution on the homestead, to allow for adequate time to investigate the historical significance of the building.

Several weeks ago, developers levelled the Ness-Adair century home, which was located across the road from McConkey. The incident lead to fears the McConkey homestead would soon be destroyed.

The McConkey property is expected to be purchased by the Trinity Development Group by June.

Developers have already been issued a demolition permit for the homestead, but have also offered to move the building, free of charge, if a new location was found.

Failing that, heritage preservationists will be allowed into the homestead, to collect any items of historical significance before demolition takes place.

"Trinity has assured the mayor and council that ads will be going in (a local newspaper); they have assured us there will be time, and that there will be access to the house if there was pending demolition for recording purposes," said Jackson.

"We are acting accordingly. There's (still an) opportunity to have ongoing discussion."

Plans for the current property include several hundred thousand square

feet of retail space and parking, trees and a manmade pond. Trinity is one of Ontario's largest retail developers, and has helped build the Colossus Centre in Vaughan and the Green Lane Centre in Newmarket.

The site would create 273 permanent and 200 construction jobs and generate \$300,000 in annual property taxes.

Bentley says council needs to take a firm stand with the developer, to ensure the building is preserved.

"You are on record as planning to provide responsive government and foster the identity of Innisfil," she said, addressing councillors. "This community is growing rapidly. We recognize that you are trying to honour our roots, but if this (New) Town Hall was constructed with farmhouses in mind, then surely that philosophy should extend beyond the bricks and mortar of this building; surely there should be an honouring of Innisfil's historic homesteads."

Police setting up in local mall and libraries

By Chris Simon

As part of Police Week celebrations, the South Simcoe Police Service wants to get to know its constituents a little better.

The service will set-up displays at three locations throughout its jurisdiction on Friday.

The Cookstown Manufacturers Outlet Mall and the Innisfil Public

Library's Lakeshore branch will each feature a display from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Bradford Public Library, located at 100 Holland Court in Bradford West Gwillimbury, will also have a display from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Officers will also be on hand, to provide insight into the police service, and talk to local residents, said Sgt. Lisa

Hunt.

"The police service will be hosting three community displays focused on crime prevention and policing," she said.

"We'll have display tables and officers. If people have questions that they want to ask a police officer, on bike helmets or whatever, then they can ask an officer."

The Cookstown display

table will include crime prevention information, while the other two locations will feature drug enforcement and safety information.

Police Week was established in 1970, and aims to raise awareness of the positive impact officers have across Ontario. The province-wide initiative is meant to coincide with Peace Officers Memorial

Day, which takes place Thursday.

"Police Week is an annual event that is dedicated to providing community connections, crime prevention and community awareness of policing services provided by each service," said Hunt. "All the police services, OPP and Ministry of Correctional Services (are participating)," she said.

"It's a week long celebration of policing and awareness. You get more recognition or awareness from doing it in one week."

This year's Police Week provincial theme is entitled Working with Today's Youth to Build Safer Communities, an attempt to bring awareness to the connection between officers, children and adolescents, said Hunt.

Health unit now taking reports on dead birds

The public can report dead birds to the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, since surveillance for the West Nile virus (WNV) program began earlier this week.

"Reporting dead birds to the health unit is an important part of our surveillance program because dead birds can be an early indicator that the virus is active in our

area," said Brenda Armstrong, supervisor of the health unit's West Nile program.

"West Nile virus is well established across the province, but our annual surveillance is what helps to give us a local picture of the risk the virus may pose to our health each year."

West Nile is spread to humans by mosquitoes that

have become infected by biting birds with the virus.

Although most people will not become sick, if bitten by an infected mosquito, WNV can cause severe illness in a percentage of the population.

The health unit's WNV plan for 2008 includes dead bird surveillance, testing of crows, blue jays and ravens, mosquito surveillance and

human surveillance. Larval dipping and adult trapping help to determine the abundance of the type of mosquitoes that spread the virus.

In 2007, the health unit received more than 900 reports of dead birds. It submitted 40 dead birds for WNV testing and two confirmed positive for the virus.

People can protect themselves from mosquitoes that

may be carrying WNV by wearing insect repellent, covering up with long sleeves and pants and by avoiding areas where mosquitoes are active.

Because mosquitoes like to breed in stagnant water, people should drain old tires, plastic containers, wading pools, wheelbarrows and clogged rain gutters regularly. They can also reduce

mosquitoes in their backyards by changing the water in bird baths weekly and putting screens on rain barrels.

Residents can report dead birds by calling Your Health Connection, at 721-7520 or 1-877-721-7250, or by using the online reporting form on the health unit's website at www.simcoemuskoka-health.org.

Hiking for Hospice Simcoe becoming an attraction

The 2008 Hike for Hospice, which took place

on Sunday May 4 along the shores of Kempenfelt Bay, was a beehive of activity as organizers saw the number

of participants dramatically increase from around 50 in 2007 to over 250 at this year's event.

Organizer Betty Matos attributed the dramatic increase in participation to a number of factors including increased awareness, under-

standing, and support for the hospice, excellent support by the media and community partners, challenges put out in the community by busi-

nesses and service clubs, the weather, and the time of day the hike was held.

Participants were treated to face painting by Clarabella, massages by Whole Body Healing, and pizza from Topper's Pizza. The funds are still coming in, surpassing all expectations of the Hike committee. With a goal set at \$20,000 (an increase of over \$12,000 from last year's total raised), organizers were thrilled to realize that over \$25,000 had come in so far.

"(This) is definitely Hospice Simcoe's year, with a new residential hospice being built, and a steady growth in support for our many activities that support those in our community living with a life-threatening illness and their loved ones," said Matos. "We rely so very heavily on the support of our community and this outpouring of support drives us forward."



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