

# ONTARIO PLANNING JOURNAL

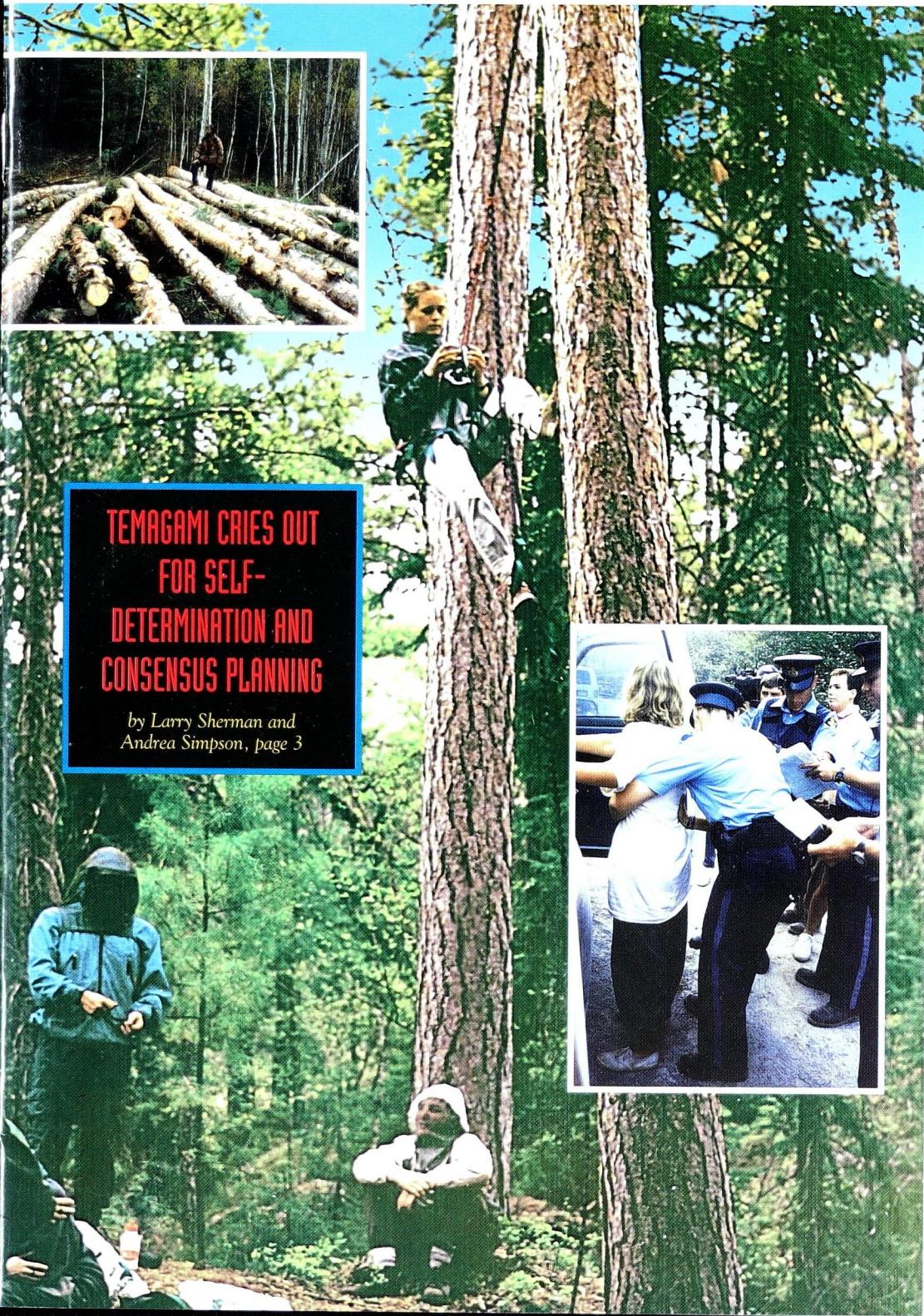
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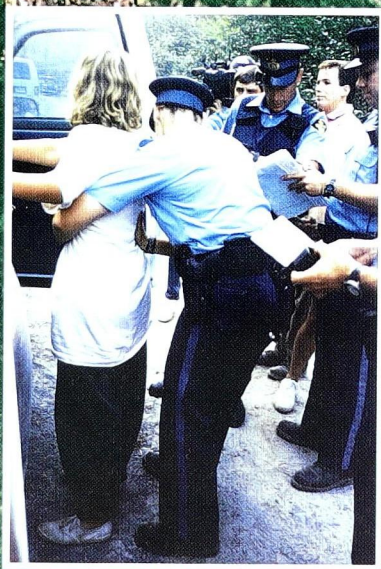
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ONTARIO PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS INSTITUTE



**TEMAGAMI CRIES OUT  
FOR SELF-  
DETERMINATION AND  
CONSENSUS PLANNING**  
*by Larry Sherman and  
Andrea Simpson, page 3*



## **Municipalities Must Exercise Due Care When Dealing With Contaminated Sites**

*Lawyer Josephina Erzetic describes some of the pitfalls associated with the new MOEE guidelines .....p. 6*  
*Planner Steven Rowe proposes ways to reintegrate contaminated sites into the urban fabric .....p. 11*

## **New Programs Introduced In London Looking For Balance**

*John Fleming writes about innovative approaches to downtown revitalization that go beyond traditional incentives .....p. 9*

## **Action, Not Words in New Tecumseth**

*Nicola Michinson begins her tenure as economic development editor with a look at how the private sector can enhance the public interest .....p. 20*

## ONTARIO PLANNING JOURNAL

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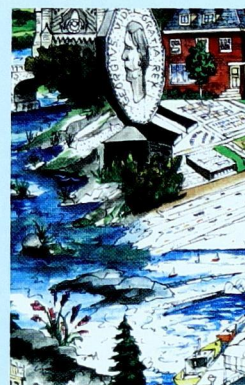
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# TEMAGAMI CRIES OUT FOR SELF-DETERMINATION AND CONSENSUS PLANNING

by Larry Sherman and Andrea Simpson

First of two parts



Management of Crown wilderness resources is a useful lesson in how and how not to manage conflict. Destructive conflict between competing advocate groups in Temagami is perpetuated by the lack of a shared vision of the future upon which to base collaborative problem solving.

By contrast, conflicting stakeholder groups in neighbouring Elk Lake have recently negotiated a common strategy for harvesting timber, protecting and reclaiming forests, maintaining jobs and strengthening the local economy. Government strategists, local activists and planners can learn a lot from this example that could be applied to Temagami and other communities facing the need to manage their conflicts and solve their problems locally.

In Ontario, the provincial government has used its regulatory and administrative powers to set and enforce policies intended to balance competing concerns for resource extraction, environmental protection and recreation. In deciding to transfer more responsibility for managing wilderness resources to local communities, the government is finding that arbitrating between these factions can create more conflict than it resolves, and that decisions do not seem to stay made. Old pressures remain, new lobby groups emerge, new evidence is uncovered, market demand and public concern swings. The uncertainty and instability that characterizes our times makes it increasingly difficult if not impossible for government to develop supportable five, ten or 15-year wilderness management plans.

## CONSENSUS BUILDING AS A PLANNING TOOL

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) has traditionally prepared multi-year plans for managing wilderness

areas, including mineral and wood extraction, road and water access, land use beyond municipal boundaries, fishing and hunting, tourism and recreation.

Typically, a draft plan is prepared by regional MNR staff, submitted to public consultation, modified, and recommended for approval by the director on the authority of the minister. Inevitably some stakeholder groups perceive that their interests have not been protected. The conflicts are exposed but unresolved, often leaving tough political decisions for the minister as well as uncertainty and instability in the community.

Although the current Ontario government promises greater stability by decisively arbitrating between conflicting stakeholders, its decisions are inevitably evoking opposition from those who feel hard done by. As the stakes rise because of declining local

mining the ultimate plan than reducing political opposition.

Meanwhile, the government has announced that it will seek ways to transfer more resource management responsibility to industry and local communities. As a result, it will face an even greater potential role as arbiter if the local stakeholders cannot resolve their differences.

## IS THERE A BETTER SOLUTION? COMPARING THE ELK LAKE AND TEMAGAMI CASES

Is there a more efficient way to build consensus among opposing parties and if so, can these parties carry it off? What process can local communities follow to reach a stable, multi-year, multi-issue, multi-party plan? How can government (a) strengthen the ability of the parties to reach consensus, and

(b) ensure that this consensus makes acceptable public policy that can be ratified by government?

The Elk Lake Timber Management Plan for 480,000 hectares (1.2 million acres) was developed last year by MNR staff through a mediated process of negotiation. There were two rounds: one between stakeholder groups representing the community, environmentalists and lumber companies, then, once a consensus option was on the

table, there was a second round of consultations with



Confrontation makes news, but not progress.

(all photos courtesy Earthroots/Hap Wilson)

affected wilderness groups, property owners and other government agencies.

The plan approved by MNR is supported by the major stakeholders, including environmental advocates, lumber companies, concerned property owners along the roads leading beyond the wilderness and agencies responsible for maintaining those roads. The plan covers sensitive cutting practices, strategic location and restricted access to cutting areas, and multi-year silviculture measures to protect and restore them.

The government could, however, still stumble over a last obstacle. An association of anglers and hunters that chose not to participate in the negotiation is now seeking exemption from MNR's access restrictions through an environmental appeal process under the Ministry of the Environment and Energy. If the Environmental Assessment Board agrees with this objection, the environmentalists will have lost a major concession and may withdraw support for the plan, the industry could incur additional cost and time delays, community development interests could be further stymied, and MNR staff could be discredited as a dependable bargaining partner.

The adjacent and overlapping Temagami Wilderness Area of 650,000 hectares (1.6 million acres) is an even more complex case. For more than ten years, the story of Temagami has been a litany of acrimony, violent confrontation, and failed attempts at local multi-party planning. A reported \$57 million of public money has been invested in the process.

Last year, the new MNR Minister gave the Comprehensive Planning Council (CPC) a six-month deadline to finalize its recommendations. In its last two months, the CPC held three public meetings to get stakeholder input before retiring behind closed doors to prepare its final attempt to influence the Minister's policy decisions on resource extraction, economic development and environmental protection.

The Minister was presented with recommendations, not only from the CPC but from competing groups. The environmentalists formulated their own plan, the local town council proposed municipal annexation of a huge extension of boundaries, groups of local business and resident interests made presentations, there was a native land claim to the rights of most of the area, and various wilderness user groups applied political pressure as well.

The Minister moved with impressive haste to announce his government's policies: expansion of logging, mining, tourism and recreation activities; approval of 22 of CPC's

39 recommendations; and a land use strategy "that will protect the environment, improve community stability and, after years of uncertainty, get on with the job..."

Predictably, some groups were less satisfied than others, and vowed to continue their opposition to the plan. Environmentalists refer publicly to the Minister's policy as the "line in the sand." Given this adversarial climate, the Minister has asked MNR to prepare a Forest Management Plan (presumably similar to



the Elk Lake plan) for Temagami and is proposing that in future such plans be prepared by the logging companies themselves.

### LESSONS LEARNED?

In both Elk Lake and Temagami, a mediator was retained late in the process as a "workshop facilitator" in a process initially perceived by the parties as "public consultation." The mediator suggested that the parties agree on a common plan, using a process of structured negotiation and collaborative problem-solving, thereby avoiding government arbitration. Although it was not without its dissenters, substantial consensus was reached in Elk Lake upon which MNR formulated its Forest Management Plan. In Temagami, the major conflicts were left for the minister to adjudicate. The differing results suggest five major lessons:

#### 1. MULTI-PARTY, MULTI-ISSUE PROBLEM-SOLVING CAN BE

### BROKEN INTO MANAGEABLE PARTS.

At Elk Lake, MNR convened representatives of the three key interests: the environmentalists, the community and the lumber companies. They agreed on three overriding clusters of issues: lumber production, wilderness access to the production areas, and environmental protection. The strategy in round one of the negotiations was to seek consensus on at least one of the six options which MNR had researched. Round two involved consultation with other interest groups affected by that option, with a view to mitigating their objections. The initial consensus was reached because the parties were able to trade across the three issues, namely production, access and protection. Once a coalition had been established by the three key stakeholder groups around a preferred option, they supported one another in addressing the concerns of affected property owners and other interests, including the Provincial Ministry of Transportation, which was seeking compensation for added impact on public roads.

These objections were sufficiently resolved to proceed to MNR approval of the consensus, although it was later to be opposed by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters.

In Temagami, issues were broken down by geographic area and presented to all the interest groups in three weekend assemblies. Because the process was not highly structured, the numbers of individuals in attendance and the variety of individual issues raised became unmanageable. No one was responsible for offering trade-offs and options that reflected the interests of others and might lead to a resolution. There was no attempt to get a small group of key stakeholders to seek common reasons for proposing a compromise package of solutions to the larger group.

#### 2. GET STAKEHOLDER BUY-IN TO THE PROCESS AND AGENDA BEFORE PROCEEDING.

In Elk Lake, the mediator and MNR staff prepared for the negotiations with representatives of the three stakeholder groups, first by teleconference and later face-to-face. They scanned the issues, agreed in principle to the mediator's suggested process of negotiations, and sketched a rough agenda. Part of this step was to identify "non-negotiables" and priority concerns of each party, so that the parties came to the weekend negotiations having already bought into the intent and prepared to work around the obstacles.

In Temagami, people attending the three

weekend workshops had been provided with a thorough set of background information and MNR's inventory of issues. However, the number of participants and issues precluded MNR's ability to hold constructive preparatory dialogue. The result was a lack of agreement on process and agenda. Time was taken in resolving differences, first among CPC members (on how to encourage and then respond to possible consensus) and then among the assembled participants (on how many representatives of a group should be allowed to sit at the table). As a result, participants were not held accountable for adhering to a structured process and ground rules.

### 3. LEADERSHIP MUST BE COMMITTED TO A CONSENSUS OUTCOME.

In the pre-workshop discussions among the stakeholders in Elk Lake, the mediator obtained MNR staff commitment to supporting a consensus outcome if it materialized.

In Temagami the CPC considered the possibility of consensus on some issues and decided not to commit itself to supporting such agreements. In announcing this decision to the assembly, the CPC chair provided a disincentive to reaching agreement by implying that if the group made trade-offs to come to a consensus, the CPC would still reserve its right to make a different recommendation to the government. In general, citizen-based advisory committees like the CPC are ineffective in a consensus-building process requiring face-to-face negotiations between the parties because they do not speak for their respective stakeholder groups and therefore have no power to make commitments.

### 4. THE PARTIES MUST UNDERSTAND THE COLLECTIVE AS WELL AS INDIVIDUAL BENEFITS OF AGREEMENT AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF DISAGREEMENT.

In Elk Lake, each of the three major stakeholder groups acknowledged that agreement was in their individual and collective best interests. A major disagreement or confrontation would delay community development and prevent the lumber company from proceeding quickly. Although the environmentalists might have wanted to delay progress, they chose to try to get access and protection concessions in exchange for agreement on the five-year production quota already negotiated between government and industry.

In Temagami there was no acknowledge-

ment of the individual or collective benefits to reaching consensus. Indeed, each major interest group announced its intention to influence the government and the public separately from the MNR/CPC process. The Town Council submitted an annexation plan to MMAH; a group of local business leaders are working on a proposal to restructure the local economic development process to gain more local control over tourism and commerce in the area; the native groups have long since pulled out of the CPC and are processing land claims through the courts; and a variety of local wilderness user groups continue to lobby a government that is headed by a premier from a neighbouring northern district. If the alternative to a negotiated agreement is perceived as stronger than that offered by the consensus planning process, the process is doomed from lack of commitment.

### 5. NEGOTIATED PROBLEM SOLVING RELIES UPON STAKEHOLDER SKILL.

In Elk Lake the number of negotiating parties was small and therefore manageable, and the individuals were experienced and skilful. Their work demonstrated an understanding of the consequences of their actions and words, and the ability to articulate individual interests and the possibility of collaborative outcomes.

Although a few of the same people participated in the Temagami sessions, they were unable to convince a large and diverse group of people who demonstrated less experience, skill and flexibility. Perhaps the mediator's role should have been expanded to help the parties prepare for consensus planning by providing training as a first step in the collaborative process.

Comparing the Elk Lake and Temagami outcomes shows that, as government moves

to include interested parties directly in sharing responsibility for managing the wilderness resource, it must be seen to maintain a balanced view, quality control, fairness and transparency in the public interest.

Both the central government and the community ultimately benefit from a stable consensus, and it will be up to both to develop sophisticated techniques of consensus building rather than adjudication to resolve the inevitable conflicts between competing interest groups. In part two of this article we will look at practices that governments can adopt to reduce confrontation and reward honest attempts by the parties to reach consensus, the key ingredients of a collaborative community-based resolution of conflict, and how the government can support a consensus once reached by the parties.

*Larry Sherman is a planner and Director of the IBI Group, mediating community development planning and public policy setting, including at Elk Lake and Temagami.*

*Andrea Simpson is a student of rural planning, conducting applied research in public-sector conflict resolution, currently addressing the fisheries dispute in P.E.I.*

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## Guideline for Use at Contaminated Sites in Ontario: The Shifting Sands

By Josephina Erzetic



With the introduction of the new Guideline for Use at Contaminated Sites in Ontario in June 1996, responsibility for supervising the remediation of contaminated sites has shifted from the Ministry of the Environment and Energy to municipalities.

Municipalities have always had the ability to influence the manner or type of development that can occur through their official plans, zoning bylaws, and conditions for draft plans of subdivision. It was, therefore, possible for a municipality to limit the use of a piece of property because of concerns regarding contamination even before the 1996 Guideline came into effect. Under the previous Guidelines for the Decommissioning and Cleanup of Sites in Ontario (1989), however, a proponent dealt directly with the MOEE over site remediation. What has changed?

The province is now delegating responsibility to municipalities in several areas, including decommissioning contaminated properties. According to the 1996 Guideline, "Local municipalities also have an interest in protecting public health and safety and the natural environment when making decisions regarding land use planning matters."

A combination of the amended subsection 3(5) of the Planning Act, the new 1996 Provincial Policy Statement, and the 1996 Guideline have accomplished the shift in responsibility away from the MOEE and to municipalities.

Subsection 3(5) of the Planning Act, as

amended, came into force May 22, 1996, as part of Bill 20. It states that in exercising any authority that affects a planning matter, the council of a municipality "shall have regard to policy statements."

The new 1996 Provincial Policy Statement came into effect with Bill 20. Section 3.2.2 states that, "Contaminated sites will be restored as necessary prior to any activity on the site associated with the proposed use such that there will be no adverse effect." When read in conjunction with the amended subsection 3(5), this means that municipalities must have regard to remediation of contaminated properties before these properties are redeveloped.

The 1996 Guideline is more specific. The key part of the 1996 Guideline for municipalities is section 9, which lays out the responsibilities of municipalities. For example, municipalities are "encouraged" to adopt Official Plan amendments that identify contaminated areas and contain policies on conditions that must be satisfied before development can occur and policies requiring verification that a site has been restored so that it is suitable for a proposed use.

For a particular development application, the municipality "may" ask the landowner to confirm that the environmental condition of the property is suitable for the proposed use. Furthermore, the municipality "may" request a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment. If a more detailed review is required, then the municipality "may" request a Phase 2 ESA before "receiving" the planning application.

If the Phase 2 ESA indicates that a remedial work plan is required, then the municipality "may" consider whether this should be completed before a decision is made on the development application.

A municipality may ensure that the RWP is completed either by imposing a condition on a draft plan of subdivision approval or a minor variance approval, or by imposing a hold on zoning. The 1996 Guideline suggests this could be done using site plan approval. However, it could be argued that there is no jurisdiction for the municipality to do this under the Planning Act.

What liability does a municipality face for not meeting these responsibilities? Although the municipality must have regard to policy statements, the 1996 Provincial Policy Statement and 1996 Guideline do not have the force of law and are not binding on the municipality. In addition, the wording of the 1996 Guideline is, in almost all cases, discretionary and not mandatory.

However, once a municipality has decided to exercise its discretion, then it must exercise due care. Failure to do so may lead to liability. For example, municipalities should develop policies on when Phase 1 and Phase 2 ESAs will be required to ensure that landowners are treated consistently. When the municipality receives an ESA, staff will review the report (or arrange for the report to be peer reviewed), and if there is a potential problem, act on it. Failure to act on it (by requiring appropriate conditions to the approval of the development application) may make the municipality liable to parties who rely on the fact that the municipality has approved the development application and therefore, arguably, represented itself as being satisfied with the environmental condition of the property.

Municipalities will have to develop methods for reviewing ESAs and ensure that staff are experienced, or have access to experience, to know when further investigation and remediation is required.

*Josephina Erzetic is a lawyer with the firm of Genest Murray DesBrisay Lamek. She can be reached at (416) 866-2404.*

*(See also: Contaminated Sites, page 11)*

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ederal MP Ron MacDonald proved to be an excellent choice as keynote speaker at OPPI's recent AGM. Focusing

on his current role as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of International Trade, MacDonald described his vision of a global marketplace populated by Canadian consultants. Planners, he said, are ideally positioned to take a lead role in making infrastructure and development projects happen. As the market for our skills undergoes rapid change here in Ontario, MacDonald's comments appear to be in tune with the times. As mentioned previously in this space, exporting planning skills will become an increasingly important part of professional practice. And this will not be limited to consultants, because several Canadian NGOs are already actively exporting a variety of talent, including practitioners in the public

## Ron MacDonald's Vision For Planners In Tune With Reality



Ron McDonald

sector on short term and "institutional strengthening" assignments. The Journal plans to report on the export market extensively in 1997. Also in the audience at the AGM was CIP President, Barb Dembek, who noted that CIP is reconstructing its skills export panel, and is looking for more Ontario representation.

So at the end of our 10th anniversary year, what are planners thinking? With so much change in every layer of institution, from school boards to hospitals to municipal government, and with municipal and development planning still lagging behind a more general recovery in the national economy, a feeling of bemusement is understandable. The accomplishments of OPPI members in helping our organization gain in stature throughout 1996 stand in pleasant contrast.

Glenn Miller  
Editor



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### TOO MANY PLANNERS, NOT ENOUGH JOBS

I was pleased to read the editorial entitled "Experience of recent graduates is microcosm of economy (or, what do planning graduates and spawning salmon have in common?)" (March/April, 1996). I would like to make two points.

First, employment opportunities within the profession are a function of the demand for, and supply of, qualified planners. I find that too often attention is focused on the demand side of the equation, which is subject to influences very much beyond our control. We need to look more closely at the number of planners entering the profession. I believe universities have an obligation to evaluate and justify current enrollment rates based on existing and projected future employment opportunities. Given the present number of experienced planners looking for work, can current enrollment rates be justified?

Second, I agree entirely with Glenn Miller's assertion that we will increasingly have to look abroad to gain useful employment in planning. However, accepting this degree of flexibility by no means guarantees one's success in securing a planning position. The barriers to gaining employment outside the Province, not to mention other countries, are enormous. The fact remains that on an individual basis, most planners cannot develop the networks and contacts necessary to search for work abroad. Clearly, the Institute must take a leadership role in establishing networks and partnerships with international planning organizations.

Mike Millar, Toronto

(Editor's Note: this issue was addressed

directly at the AGM in October, where a motion was passed requesting Council to establish a position on the Institute's role, including ways to support and amplify CIP's mandate in this area.)

### PLANNING PARTNERSHIP APPLAUDED FOR APPROACH TO HIRING.

When one reflects on the negative atmosphere that has surrounded employment and labour-related issues across much of Ontario recently, one planning firm should be applauded for the proactive manner in which a recent employment competition was handled. In contrast to the generic response letters that most employers forward to unsuccessful applicants, the Planning Partnership chose to provide valuable information, as follows:

- information on the total number of applications as well as the number of interviews conducted;
- information on the credentials of the successful applicant;
- stats on educational background of applicants and work status;
- breakdown according to sector.

Without ignoring that most hiring processes will continue to be overly cumbersome and poorly managed, I would strongly suggest that employers can learn from the Planning Partnership approach, where a willingness to go beyond human resource techniques communicated valuable information in a humane manner to those who need it most. Bravo!

Cameron B. McEwen.

Cameron is a provisional member of OPPI,

currently on assignment with the Township of Goulbourn in Stittsville. The Journal invites discussion on this sensitive issue. We heard recently about a board held by a public sector institution for a junior position involving 12 people for the first level interview!

### CONFUSING ISSUES FOR PROFESSIONALS IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE

Your editorial in the October issue of the Journal must have touched an emotional and confusing issue for many professional planners in government - how to provide service within what you call a "self-loathing" atmosphere. Pretty strong stuff.

As a consultant, what has struck me in recent years is not so much the "slide into negativity" which you describe, but the attempts by government to emulate private business in an unfortunately superficial and curious fashion. For example, the visitor parking spaces at many municipal offices are now designated as "customer parking." In many municipalities, the term "applicant" has been replaced by the word "client." The most bizarre examples appear in correspondence from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to municipalities wherein a municipality is referred to as a "customer." I suppose it replaces "creature," which is just as peculiar.

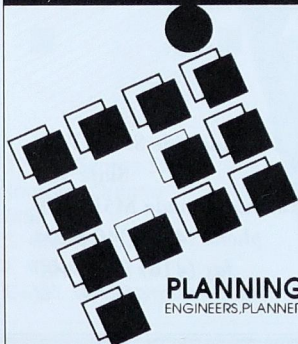
They say imitation speaks to sincere flattery. When government does this, however, it strikes many as patronization. That happens because, although there is less security in government these days, there is (arguably) guaranteed cash flow and no competition. There is no risk of bankruptcy in a true business sense.

As government planning departments learn to work lean, as the private planners did in 1991-92, it would be my suggestion to keep the division of public and private service crisply distinct. There will be future professional partnerships among the sectors that will require that this be so.

Robert J. Miller MCIP RPP

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# Rehabilitation and redevelopment grant program in London

By John M. Fleming

**D**ebate about the state of London's Downtown has been a consistent theme in public discussions since the early 1980s.

Like most Planning Departments throughout North America, planners in London have produced a variety of reports dealing with Downtown design, infrastructure, land use, safety, marketing and promotion. What was missing from these studies was a clear strategic direction for action.

Two major influences changed all this. First, a new Mayor, Dianne Haskett, was elected in 1993 on a platform of downtown revitalization. Mayor Haskett immediately by established a results-oriented Downtown Action Team. A second influence was the hiring of a new Director of Planning and Development. Victor Cote had previously worked for the City to develop London's Official Plan, with a heavy downtown bias, in the late 1980s. Cote considered the political direction for downtown revitalization a major part of his mandate and was committed to going beyond traditional planning studies to get results. These two appointments were complemented by a new Administrator of Policy, Gregg Barrett, who had a private sector background dealing with downtown revitalization initiatives in the United States.

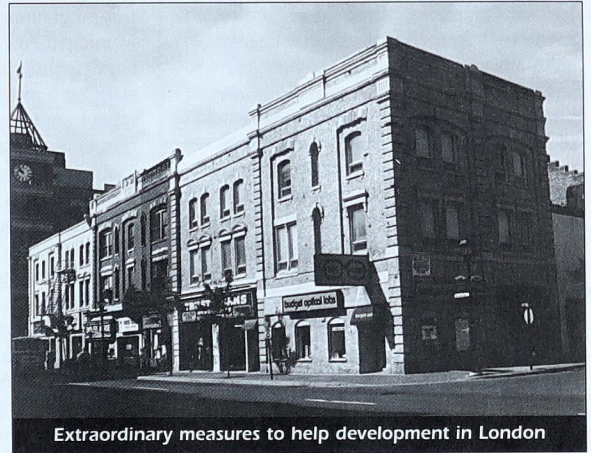
In late 1994, the Planning Division released a report which bridged the gap between planning study and strategic action. "A Summary of Potential Strategies for Revitalizing London's Downtown" listed a series of implementation strategies under three categories:

- (i) Economic Incentives;
- (ii) Partnership Programs; and
- (iii) Regulatory Incentives. Among the economic incentives listed in the report were the concepts of removing development charges, removing development application fees, and eliminating parking requirements. However, it was another economic incentive that raised many eyebrows both in the City and among other interested municipalities in Ontario: a tax rebate program for downtown revitalization projects. Every time the topic of downtown revitalization was broached with land owners and business proprietors in the downtown, the subject of property taxation was raised. The general

theme was that downtown land holders were being assessed at too high a rate to make new development feasible in the core. It was suggested that these assessed values, which are based on a project's revenue flows, did not recognize the comparatively high costs of developing projects in the core. Land costs, demolition costs, and parking creation costs are all typically higher in the core than they are in suburban locations. Although a project in the downtown may have revenue flows equal to those of a project in the suburbs, an equal assessed value would act as a competitive disadvantage to the downtown project.

For years, this argument had fallen on deaf ears in City Hall. After all, properties were assessed by the province's Ministry of Finance and City officials were not legally authorized to apply different mill rates to different areas of the City. What could the City be expected to do? The answer began to evolve through the concept of a redevelopment and rehabilitation grant program.

The idea is relatively simple. Every time a land owner redevelops or rehabilitates a property, the assessed value and annual taxes of that property increase. In essence, this increase in taxes is working as an economic disincentive to downtown redevelopment

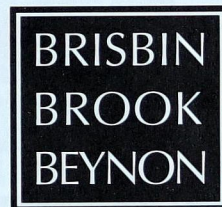


Extraordinary measures to help development in London

and rehabilitation projects. To counteract this disincentive, the Downtown Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Grant Program calls for an annual grant back to the land owner to offset the increase in taxes which result from the redevelopment or rehabilitation project.

After much debate a grant schedule was produced. Downtown projects were placed into one of three categories:

- (i) demolition and redevelopment;
  - (ii) rehabilitation of existing structures; and
  - (iii) rehabilitation of heritage structures.
- Consistent with previous downtown studies that advocated the preservation of heritage structures and fine grained development wherever possible, grant amounts were highest for the improvement of heritage build-



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ings. Lower grant levels were offered for the rehabilitation of existing structures which were not listed as heritage resources. The lowest grant level was for new development.

These annual grants were given for a ten year period, beginning the year after a project was completed (when the property was reassessed). In each category, the largest grant amount was given in the first year and declined gradually over the following nine years. Grant amounts were expressed in percentage terms, relating to a proportion of the original tax increase that resulted from the rehabilitation or redevelopment project. The impact that this programme could have on a project's viability is best shown by way of example. The last major project developed in Downtown London was a 27 storey, 350,000 sq.ft. office building (One London Place). Almost \$2.3 million in taxes could have been saved by the developer of this project over a ten year period if the Downtown Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Grant Programme existed when it was constructed. Smaller projects, like the rehabilitation of an old post office building in Downtown London, would have saved approximately

\$280,000 in taxes if the programme existed. Obviously, the program can save developers substantial amounts and can change the proforma of project proposals.

The most commonly held question coming forward was "does the City have the legislative authority to implement this programme?" Section 111(1) of the Municipal Act specifically precludes municipalities from directly or indirectly assisting businesses by providing grants or relief from taxes. However, this same section includes an exception which states that such restriction "...does not apply to a Council that is exercising any of its power or authority under subsection 28(6) or (7) of the Planning Act where the power or authority is exercised with the approval of the Minister."

Section 28 of the Planning Act provides for the identification of Community Improvement Areas and the adoption of Community Improvement Plans for those areas. Within identified Community Improvement Areas, municipalities may develop assistance programs for businesses and residents to facilitate redevelopment and rehabilitation. Under Section 28 the Planning Division established the Downtown as a Community Improvement Area and created a Community Improvement Plan for this area. The Community Improvement Plan included the Downtown Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Grant Program, explaining its intent to offset initial tax increases that result from Downtown revitalization projects. In December of 1995 the Community Improvement Plan was

Ministry approved, and the City had legal authority to implement this innovative Grant Programme. Perhaps one of the most intriguing features of the Downtown Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Grant Programme is that it carries very small "up-front" costs. Rather than the usual

requirement for up-front Public money to provide municipal grants, this grants which are borne through "opportunity costs". Simply put, the City tax revenues over a ten-year period. This deferral is more palatable when one realizes that certain rehabilitation and redevelopment projects may not occur at all without the program and their corresponding tax revenues could be lost entirely.

London's Downtown Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Grant Program has been in place since January, 1996. It is still too early to know how effective it will be in sparking revitalization projects Downtown. To date there have been many enquiries relating to the programme. Three developers have begun projects with the intent of capitalizing on the grant back scheme. Furthermore, development industry representatives suggest that the programme is having a positive effect on the way developers view Downtown projects and their feasibility.

*John M. Fleming is a policy planner with the City of London Planning Division. This is his second article for the Journal.*



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**Communication Award presented to Mary Purcell (Val Cranmer), Jim Miller, Steven Jew, Pam Robinson, Township of Pittsburgh**

# New MOEE Guidelines Affect Identification of Potentially Contaminated Sites

By Steven Rowe  
(Second of two parts)

In considering both broad scale policies and site specific proposals for development on potentially contaminated sites, municipalities should bear in mind a range of potential issues:

The Guideline attempts to impose a responsibility on municipalities to identify contaminated sites as they come forward for planning approvals, suggesting that known or suspected areas of soil or ground-water contamination be identified in Official Plans. There may be

some concern among landowners, however, when unproven and potentially damaging information regarding their lands is included in a formal public document. It may be difficult for MOEE to follow up on these recommendations, given that it is opting out of the plan review function in many parts of Ontario. Municipalities should consider how they intend to screen sites for contamination, as part of their approvals process. Where the prior use of a site indicates potential for contamination (a former tannery would be an obvious example), then a Phase 1 ESA, with further follow-up if necessary, should be required.

## LAND USE COMPATIBILITY

It may not be economically feasible to remediate and develop a contaminated site within the current Official Plan designation and zoning. Landowners may request land use redesignation and/or rezoning, density increases, bonusing or other concessions, and there is a potential for new uses, such as residential or commercial, to conflict with or disrupt the stability of an adjacent area. Municipalities will need to balance these considerations against the potential advantages of restoring and re-using contaminated land.

## LEVEL OF ASSURANCE

A landowner would wish to see some assurance of planning approvals before committing resources to site restoration, and a municipality will wish to see a formal commitment to restoration before approvals can be given. Municipalities will need to consider the levels in the approval process at which a commitment to restore—and proof that restoration has occurred—will be required. The policies in the King-Parliament Part II Plan in the City of Toronto, for example, provide for the use of “holding” zones. The conditions for lifting of the “hold” include the preparation of an Environmental Management Plan that would include proposals for the restoration of contaminated land, and the securing of any necessary agreements to implement this Plan.

## LIABILITY

MOEE claims that the Guideline has taken a conservative approach in defining criteria for clean-up. They are intended to ensure that neither humans nor the natural environment are exposed to harmful levels of contamination. Despite this, the issue of potential liability for any future effects of contamination on human health has taken on a significance that seems to go beyond the actual level of risk in the use of remediated lands. In the past, financial institutions have been wary of investing money in contaminated sites. The MOEE's approach in “downloading” liability to a consultant has, perhaps, increased the perception that this is an over-riding concern. Municipalities may be concerned that, by the time any problem is identified, the consultant and its insurer could have long since disappeared.

Any potential risk should be considered in the context of the planning, environmental, and financial advantages of cleaning up these sites and bringing them forward for development. (See the inset article by Josie Erzetic.) In reviewing their own approval

procedures, Municipalities may wish to consider whether they should accept the “Record of Site Condition” provided by the consultant at face value, or whether they should require peer review of reports and site remediation procedures. Peer review may lead to further implications including delay and increased cost, the reconciliation of any differences between consultants' opinions, and the possibility of greater exposure to liability on the part of the municipality.

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION

A derelict industrial site can often be of considerable concern to a nearby community, and the prospect of restoration may raise further issues relating to the possible spread of contamination off-site, and the proposed new land use. The Guideline recommends that consultation on remediation be integrated with the required consultation under the Planning Act for development approvals. Where no consultation is actually required under the Planning Act (such as for the lifting of a “hold” or where remediation is undertaken by agreement, following approvals), it may be advisable to continue or initiate consultation to address public concerns.

## CONCLUSION

There are very strong land use arguments for reintegrating contaminated sites into the urban fabric, and there is a wider range of techniques and methods available for site remediation than ever before. The new Guideline provides a common basis for both municipalities and landowners to consider site restoration and reuse, although municipalities may wish to adapt its suggestions to reflect their own needs. While, in rare cases, some remediations may raise future problems, these limited uncertainties should not be allowed to negate the regeneration opportunities that can be found in most urban communities across Ontario.

*Steven Rowe is an associate with Walker Nott Dragicevic Ltd. He is a frequent contributor to the Journal.*

**IN THE PAST, FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS HAVE BEEN WARY OF INVESTING MONEY IN CONTAMINATED SITES. THE MOEE'S APPROACH IN "DOWNLOADING" LIABILITY TO A CONSULTANT HAS, PERHAPS, INCREASED THE PERCEPTION THAT THIS IS AN OVER-RIDING CONCERN.**

# Assessment Note

By Tony Usher



Thanks to a promotional letter from a "fight that assessment" consultant, I'm going to be saving about \$175 a year in business taxes from now on. Many of you may be able to do the same.

I have always paid business taxes for my rented offices at 50 percent of the assessed value. Like many of you, I'm not familiar with the intricacies of the Assessment Act, and never knew there was any other option. However, section 7(1) of the Act lays out a whole series of business tax percentages.

Assessors apply 50 percent to planning consultants on the basis of Section 7(1)(f)(i), which enumerates a wide variety of professionals — not including planners! Section 7(1)(k) states that "any business not specially mentioned before in this section" shall pay only 30 percent of assessed value.

I appealed my business assessment per-

centage to the Assessment Review Board on the basis that I am a member of a profession recognized by statute and not enumerated in Section 7(1)(f)(i). Shortly before the hearing date, the Ministry of Finance told me that it would not contest my appeal and that a decision would be issued in my favour.

According to the assessor:

- we are a recognized profession,
- there's no assessment case law about planners,
- my small tax bill wasn't worth a fight

However, the Ministry is not setting a precedent, and has postponed a decision on whether planning consultants should be included in the 50 percent group by analogy with other professionals. Presumably they will make their decision when somebody with a bigger tax bill appeals.

This opportunity isn't for everyone.

- Home-based practitioners generally don't

pay business tax anyway.

- If you practice with engineers or architects, you're probably out of luck. They are mentioned in Section 7(1)(f)(i).
- If you're a larger firm, you should be prepared for a fight with Ministry of Finance lawyers at the Assessment Review Board, though the case still looks like an awfully good one.

For me, after paying \$50 for the appeal and \$50 to the assessment consultant in thanks for the idea, the effort was worthwhile. Maybe these provisions of the Act will be changed when the assessment system is "fixed" (but if you believe that's imminent, call me, I have some bridges for sale!) If you're interested, move quickly. The appeal deadline for 1997 taxes will be on January 7, 1997.

*Tony Usher is a consultant with an appreciation of the finer points in life.*

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## SIGHTS SET ON MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

By Valerie Cranmer, President



Valerie Cranmer

OPPI is at a critical point in its development as a professional organization. The past ten years have seen considerable change and growth in the Institute. Some of the changes which reflect this maturation of the Institute are:

- revisions to the membership process and the membership outreach program that have resulted in renewed interest in membership;
- formal recognition of the profession through the OPPI Act and a corresponding increase in consultation on provincial policy issues;
- finalization of vision statements, a strategic plan to implement the goals of the Institute and restructuring of Council to reflect these goals;
- the success of our most valued member service, the Journal;
- the professional manner in which the Institute is administered.

In its next term, Council will examine the services provided to our members and how they are delivered. It is also important to make the best use of our volunteers. We hope that work in these areas will increase members' awareness of what Council does, and through new initiatives, raise the awareness of OPPI among other groups.

At the August meeting in Sudbury, Council created a small committee to examine how OPPI can better use its volunteers. In comparison with other similar organizations, we do not have a large contingent of volunteers and we often rely on the same members over and over again for assistance.

It is only through the time and energy devoted by our members to the Institute that we have been able to achieve the level of success we enjoy today. In the past, the Institute has been accused of creating expect-

tations of using our membership and then not following through. It is necessary to determine where and how assistance is needed from the membership.

The work of our volunteers is conducted mainly through our committee structure, both at the provincial and district levels. Through the election of directors who will chair the respective committees, the general membership will

become more aware of and more involved in the activities of Council. Guidelines for the management of volunteers on the committees are being prepared and will be discussed at the November Council meeting, before the new committees are appointed.

Our goal is to make wider and more specific use of volunteers, and as a result, to ensure a more effective role for our members, leading to better dissemination of information on Institute activities and a higher profile for OPPI.

There are challenging times ahead. By building on the renewed enthusiasm of our membership, the Institute will be able to lead our profession into the twenty-first century.

*Valerie Cranmer is the principal of Valerie Cranmer Associates based in Durham.*



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# LEARNING TO WORK WITH THE NEW PLANNING SYSTEM

By Ron Shishido

Over the past eight months the planning community has faced an endless stream of changes to provincial policy, statutory legislation, regulations, standards, guidelines and administrative procedures and functions introduced as part of the Conservatives' efforts to restructure government activities.

OPPI's Public Policy Committee has participated in policy review forums with outside stakeholders' groups. Although we have had some successes and some frustrations with the process, we try to keep in mind the adage, "You can't score a run from the parking lot." We therefore will continue our efforts to further the cause of good community planning and development over fast community planning and development.

Influencing and shaping public policy is one of the responsibilities assigned to the

committee in our strategic plan. Our other responsibility is to inform the planning community about the nature and implications of emerging public policy changes.

We are therefore spearheading an education and training program on the Bill 20 planning system in partnership with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the OPPI District/Sub-District program committees. This program is intended to serve as the platform for an ongoing series of information sessions delivered on a regional basis.

The first series on the Provincial Policy Statement and the One-Window approach will consist of a full-day session in which MMAH and other ministries, as well as public- and private-sector planners from each local area, provide instruction, insights, helpful tips, and lessons learned from work-

ing with the new planning system. The sessions include a combination of presentations, panel discussions and breakout workshops. The panel discussions and workshops will use local case studies to provide a more focused context for the sessions. Regional sessions are planned between October and January for Orillia, Peterborough, London, Ottawa-Carleton, Sudbury and the GTA.

For more information on this New Planning Systems Education and Training Program, as well as other Public Policy Committee initiatives, please call Ron Shishido at (416) 229-4646. For information on registration for upcoming sessions please contact the OPPI Office at (416) 483-1873. Ron is the Director, Public Policy, on OPPI Council. He is a senior planner with Dillon in Toronto.

## MARKETING YOURSELF AND YOUR SMALL BUSINESS: A CORG WORKSHOP

By Sean Demsky and Fraser Smith

OPPI's Career Opportunities Resource Group held a full-day workshop in the summer about establishing a small business as well as preparing for the job market.

Dave Cook, partner and national director of independent business advisory services at KPMG, described the importance of business planning. He talked about the benefits of planning ahead strategically, because a good business plan improves profitability and competitiveness, makes getting financing easier, focuses marketing efforts, reduces failure and provides guideposts for decision making.

At the second session, P. Patrick Matozzo, managing director, and Debbie Cella, marketing and communications instructor from the Vaughan Technology Enterprise Centre, held an interactive forum in

which participants learned about marketing themselves from an entrepreneurial and personal perspective. Matozzo and Cella outlined the key characteristics of an entrepreneur and helped workshop participants identify their strengths and weaknesses, create an inventory of their personal skills and experience, and perform a goal-setting exercise.

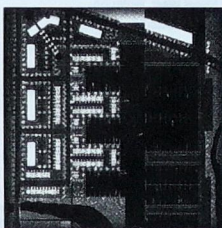
After lunch, the last session was hosted by Lana Sherman, tax manager at Ernst & Young. She spoke about financial planning, sourcing financing, tax implications for a small business (GST payments and refunds), exporting services, the importance of a business plan, and business incorporation and registration.

CORG would like to thank OPPI for registration and door prizes. We would also like to thank M.M. Dillon Ltd. for generously donating space for the workshop. CORG also appreciates the time and effort provided by the speakers.

Sean Demsky and Fraser Smith are partners at Urban Analysis

Planning and Development Consultants. Sean can be reached at (416) 535-3492 and Fraser at (416) 535-9983 or fax us at (416) 535-4841.

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## WEBSITE A WINDOW ON THE FUTURE

By Patrick Déoux

During the last two years, much has been accomplished by the Publications Committee. Restructuring will ensure the long-term survival of the Journal as one of the most visible services offered by OPPI. Several new operational mechanisms are also being implemented to guarantee that the Journal continues to meet the highest professional standards.

An OPPI website on the Internet became operational in February. The site is impressive and is continually being improved. It provides current information of interest to the planning community, a direct contact with OPPI staff and representatives via e-mail, and an important information exchange hub for members and other communities of interest. Phase one has been completed to our satisfaction.

Both of these initiatives were important and the dedicated members of the Committee who developed and implemented them deserve credit. There is, however, more work to be done. The contract for the Journal must be finalized and operational measures that will permit it to run smoothly and effectively must be put in place.

A second phase for the website is in the works. OPPI intends to develop a commercial aspect to the site to enable OPPI, planners and other public or corporate associates to benefit financially and otherwise from our site on the Internet. All basic services would of course remain free to our members and new services will be added in the months to come. However, our site also provides great potential for corporate adver-



Patrick G. Déoux in relaxed mood.

tising and for promoting and selling publications or intellectual property. An electronic publishing house is only one of the several avenues we are exploring. The possibilities are very exciting.

As part of Council restructuring, the Director, Communications and Publications, will be responsible for developing and implementing a communications strategy to fill gaps and synchronize the actions of the various committees. With the help of the committee's members

and Council, I firmly intend to tackle these new tasks with the enthusiasm they deserve.

It has been a privilege to serve as chair of the Publications Committee throughout my 1994-96 term as representative-at-large on Council and it will be a pleasure to serve as Director, Communications and Publications, for the next two years.

*Patrick is Director, Communications and Publications, on OPPI Council. He is a senior planner with Delcan Ltd in Ottawa.*

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## MEMORIES OF SUDBURY '96

The best way I can describe OPPI's Sudbury conference is to list some "best memories" of those few days when more than 200 planners got together to network, study, and party. These include:

- listening to Len Miller and his band outside on the patio of Science North at the 10th Anniversary BBQ (and enjoying the first nice weather we'd had in weeks);
- Don McCullough describing the shoot-

ing star that crossed the entire sky during the last boat cruise at the BBQ;

- Louise Foster of the Burnside Group handing us a cheque to cover hospitality hour at our BBQ (especially appreciated as an earlier sponsor had withdrawn only days before the conference);
- the standing ovation by 250 delegates and guests for Dr. Roberta Bondar—this was before she spoke and the standing

ovation when she completed her slide show of spell-binding photos of ecosystems on earth and the earth itself from space;

- the friendly and energetic corporate sponsors who drew names for prizes at the banquet: Greg Daly from Weir and Foulds provided free baseball tickets and Alison Platt and Ornella Richichi from Walker, Nott Dragicicvic had a great gift basket to give away;

- the tension within the audience and between the speakers as the Development Charges session got under way;
- listening to John Wright at the first luncheon plenary session tell us that people are drawing a circle with a five-block radius around their homes and calling this their "world";
- Robert Fraser and Laurie Bontinen patiently working with other volunteers at the registration desk;
- Mediacom's packed hospitality suite;
- children "loading up" on the school bus with their sleeping bags to head over to the Science North campover;
- Andrea Kelly giving the tenth anniversary slide show (great music, Andrea!);
- Jane Pepino at the second plenary luncheon telling us, "Build it, but they may not come";
- a banquet room full of daisies as we walked in for the Tuesday night dinner;
- that same banquet room two hours later with a dance floor full of planners (thanks to fantastic and hilarious entertainment by Danny Diaz);
- and finally, the Windsor '97 organizing committee with their tuxedos and bow ties generating enthusiasm about next August's conference.



Front, l to r. Lynn O'Farrell, Julie Ingo, Tammy Gran, Tin Chee Wu, Jim Burke, Carolyn Hart. Back. Sue Heffernan, Celia Teale, Lana Kutchaw, Heather Robertson, Laurie Bontinen, Dan Napier. Dan McCullough, John Roininen



## SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT

### SUCCESSFUL PORT STANLEY SESSION

By Don Stewart

On the weekend of September 20 to 22, 1996 we held a successful Annual General Meeting in Port Stanley for the Southwestern District. About 90 people attended, including 20 Dutch university students.

Our traditional Friday evening wine and cheese party was preceded by welcoming comments from Bruce Smith, MCIP, MPP for the Elgin County area, a tall ship slide presentation by Robert Shipley, and presentations on the 1996 OPPI Tenth Anniversary celebration and plans for the 1997 OPPI Annual Conference in Windsor. All in all, the evening was so successful that extra wine had to be ordered.

The Saturday morning panel discussion on "The Development of the Port Stanley/Cleveland Ferry Service: Land Use Issues Versus Economic Impact" attracted so many people that it had to be held in the Port Stanley's Council Chambers. Grant Hipgrave, general manager of the Elgin Community Development Corporation, Councillor John Kierluk, and Reeve Penny

Tolmie gave us all a better appreciation of the bright economic outlook for Port Stanley with the re-establishment of a ferry route between Port Stanley and Cleveland. The ferry ship Viking is currently being refurbished in Port Stanley, and local residents are hoping that the ferry service will help return Port Stanley to its earlier days as the playground of Southwestern Ontario.

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After a tour of the ship, we scoured the village in a successful scavenger hunt organized by the program committee. Our traditional Saturday evening banquet was followed by an evening of boisterous karaoke. We clearly have a number of rising stars in our midst (and some falling ones - no names need be mentioned).

We were pleased to welcome the incoming president of OPPI, Valerie Cranmer, CIP president Barb Dembek, who is a member of Southwestern District, as well as OPPI executive director Susan Smith. If you weren't there, you missed another great meeting. Be sure not to miss it next year!

*Don is Editorial Coordinator and Chairman, Southwestern District. He is a senior planner with Planning Initiatives Ltd.*

## GTA SUB DISTRICT

by Steve Willis

In September, the GTA Program Committee hosted a workshop on women in planning. About 15 people came to hear planners Melanie

Hare and Reggie Modlich, lawyer Abby Bushby, and York University professor Barbara Rahder discuss feminist views in the profession and opportunities for increasing sensitivity to women's issues.

The program committee is considering a follow-up to this session later in the year.

The committee is also planning events on planning reform and brownfield development. Further details will be available in future mailings.

## BOOKS

### Unplanned Suburbs, Toronto's American Tragedy, 1900 to 1950

by Richard Harris, Baltimore, The Johns University Hopkins Press, 1996, 356 pages, \$55.95 (hard cover)  
ISBN 0-8018-5142-4

Reviewed by Eudora Pendergrast, MCIP, RPP

The years from the turn of the century through World War I are generally regarded as the founding period of Canadian planning, when initiatives in public health, housing, conservation, local government and civic design emerged in response to the problems of rapid urbanization in a newly industrialized economy. Planning historians also identify early forms of municipal subdivision control and zoning, together with minimum health and building standards, as useful if limited accomplishments of an emerging and fundamentally progressive profession.

Richard Harris' scholarly, fascinating and somewhat iconoclastic account of the same period starts from a different perspective: that of the thousands of working-class immigrants who came to Toronto during this

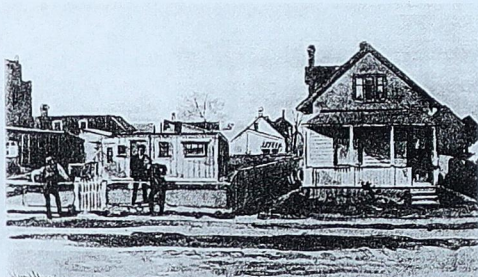
period, largely from the British Isles, and who were able to achieve affordable home ownership in working-class suburbs outside Toronto's municipal boundaries precisely because the regulations that urban reformers were fighting for had not yet been achieved.

Frugal domesticity, a culturally-instilled desire for home ownership, Toronto's booming industrial economy and the availability of cheap building lots on unserviced and unregulated land on the urban fringe enabled blue-collar workers to build and gradually upgrade their own simple homes, often starting with nothing more than a tent or an unheated shack.

According to Harris, the unplanned suburban communities in York Township, East York, New Toronto, Mimico and Long Branch call into question the dichotomy of inner city poverty/suburban affluence which Harris believes has distorted our understanding of 20th century North

American urbanization.

Drawing on prodigious research into assessment, land registry and building permit records, as well period journalism and oral history, Harris' account of Toronto's early urban development, which he argues is not exceptional in the North American context, also challenges other urban "givens": that the inner city was the prime locus of working class life; that residential development



### Unplanned Suburbs

*Toronto's American Tragedy 1900 to 1950*



Richard Harris

followed street cars into the suburbs; and that the suburbanization of industrial jobs led the way for blue-collar settlement beyond the urban fringe. Harris also takes on what he considers another myth: that Toronto benefitted from an early "planning mentality," to use Jim Lemon's phrase, which distinguishes it from other North American cities.

The tragedy of the book's title refers to the consequences of a failure of governments to plan these communities in a way that would have promoted the personal and social benefits of working class home ownership, while facilitating the efficient provision of public services. Instead, Harris argues, early zoning ordinances were used to protect and enhance the property values of affluent residential suburbs such as Forest Hill and Swansea, and sanitary codes and building standards made inexpensive owner-built housing increasingly problematic. The cost of servicing development in communities beyond Toronto's municipal boundaries also resulted in increased property taxes and personal and municipal bankruptcies and turned this early form of affordable home ownership into a forgotten chapter of Toronto's urban history.

Notwithstanding a troublesome ambiguity about whether unregulated blue-collar home-building was a good or a bad thing in the circumstances, Harris provides a fresh and provocative look at a period planners may think they know well. By contrasting the tragedy of unplanned North American suburbs with the successes of European self-help programs, such as Stockholm's "magic house" program, Harris asserts that there were other models for shaping urban growth than those which "fit" so easily with the middle class values and property interests which shaped the political agenda of the North American capitalist city.

The proposal with which Harris ends his book—that we draw on the values of "thrift, mutual aid and self-help which went into the making of unplanned suburbs" as a starting point for renewing individual and community lives which have become permeated by commodity relations—was not a completely satisfying conclusion for this reader. However, historical critiques which assert that we could have done things differently, while providing convincing and documented explanations for why history unfolded as it did are frequently frustrating as guides for present

action. They nevertheless can open our eyes, as this book, with its subtext critique of planning as a protective, restrictive and regulatory activity, certainly does. It is recommended reading.

*Eudora Pendergrast is a planner and mediator in private practice in Toronto.*



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## Community Partnerships - Action, Not Words in New Tecumseth

By Nicola Michinson



community economic development; grass roots participation; partnerships; strategic alliances; empowerment; community selfreliance; future vision. We hear these terms again and again, to the point where they become hollow expressions, like much of the jargon we tend to employ.

This is unfortunate because, in many communities, these terms are expressions of reality. For instance, the promotion of a community by its chamber of

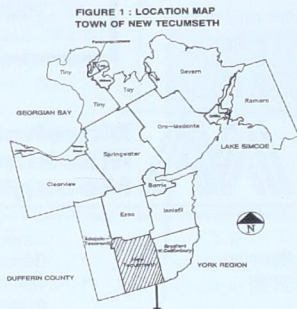


FIGURE 1 : LOCATION MAP  
TOWN OF NEW TECUMSETH

commerce, tourism association and BIA is nothing less than a partnership. The establishment of technology exchanges and training programs between a local college and local businesses is clearly a strategic alliance. And, a group of visionary, proactive and committed citizens taking responsibility for their future is the stuff that empowerment and self-reliance are made of. The terms and phrases of which we tire actually describe the local initiatives of numerous communi-

ties province-wide aimed at economic growth and self-sufficiency.

Grass roots community economic development parallels the more formal process of corporate strategic planning: determine what we are, where we want to go, how we get there and then evaluate and revise our performance over time. Although this sounds straight forward it is no small endeavour for a community, particularly when one considers that there is an inherent cynicism regarding government, a pervasive lack of money and that people are focused more on "survival" than on community participation.

The Town of New Tecumseth (formerly Alliston, Beeton, Tottenham and Tecumseth) is an example of a community that has, through strong community partnerships, put words into action and assumed responsibility for its economic future. This was done even though Alliston is home to Honda Canada, an asset that many communities would see as their economic development panacea.

The Economic Development Committee for New Tecumseth (EDC) was established in 1993. Comprised of broad based community representation including the chambers, community service groups, members of Town Council, local business people and the agricultural community, its mandate is to "assist existing businesses, actively attract new businesses, develop a positive and supportive business environment and encourage participation of the entire community in the achievement of greater community well being."

With this mandate in mind, the EDC began a six month community economic development strategic planning program in September, 1995. The project was partially funded by the Federal and Provincial governments (IAS, OTAB, jobsOntario). The balance of the project, including the hiring of an economic development officer and the establishment of an economic development office, was funded by the Town and by significant donations of money and in-kind contributions from individual Committee members and local businesses. Major community partners included Stevenson Memorial Hospital (FOCUS), the South

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**New Tecumseth Business Award Recipients - Quality and Excellence**

Simcoe Information Centre (CONTACT), the South Simcoe Employment Committee, Honda, Baxter Laboratories and the local chambers of commerce. In addition, countless hours of volunteer effort were spent on training, focus group facilitation, community forums and implementation (action planning) workshops.

The result: a comprehensive community economic development strategy entitled "Blueprint for Prosperity" (The Jones Consulting Group); the establishment of a non-profit economic development corporation as the umbrella organization for economic development in the Town (the New Tecumseth Economic Development Corporation); improved communication, cooperation and coordination among the various community stakeholders; and, the emergence of a core group of community partners empowered for action by a greater appreciation of the importance of community economic development.

As a direct consequence of the community economic development strategy, the Corporation is focusing on three primary areas: human resource development, business and professional development and broader community development. There are numerous community actions supporting each area. With respect to the "people" component, for example, the Corporation is presently partnering with Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) as its agent for human resource development services - needs assessment, counselling and training. It is partnering with HRDC and the United Way to host a youth job fare in the new year and is also working with Georgian College in developing a robotics training course. In terms of business development the Corporation hosted an annual business

awards banquet (a gala event which recognizes and promotes local business excellence), created a detailed business data base and is sponsoring a variety of workshops to assist small and medium sized businesses.

New Tecumseth is a success story and there are many others. In a rapidly changing and competitive environment, this community successfully established enlightened partnerships for individual and community betterment. So as you can see, the terms we loosely employ are important and as New Tecumseth has demonstrated, words can successfully transcend into action.

Nicola Mitchinson is the Journal's contributing editor for economic development. She is a planner and project manager with the Jones Consulting Group, Barrie. Nicola is an active member of the Economic Developers Council of Ontario, an appointed member to the City of Barrie Economic Development Advisory Committee and has been involved in a number of strategic planning and community economic development initiatives. Any suggestions for articles are welcome. Please contact Nicola Michinson (705-743-2538, or jones@barint.on.ca).

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A current high profile project is managing the development process surrounding Downsview on behalf of Canada Lands. This is one of the largest development opportunities in the country. The REAS team is also working with the Cornell Development Group and Ontario Realty Corporation on the disposition of one of the largest municipally approved residential land holdings.

The firm has also been engaged in transportation related work, including the privatization of Highway 104 in Nova Scotia and an examination of the potential to undertake a similar project in Hamilton with the Red Hill Creek Expressway. "We provide a wide range of services," points out Ellis, "including casino feasibility in Ontario and the Maritimes to retail feasibility in Zagreb, Croatia."

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## STUDENT VOICES

### Student Voices Being Heard

By Gerry Melenka



On September 14, 1996, the Student Liaison Committee gathered in Toronto to discuss membership issues and concerns. The committee is composed of representatives from the seven recognized planning schools in Ontario and is responsible for encouraging and facilitating communication between OPPI, practising planners, planning schools and student members.

With that responsibility in mind we



Gerry Melenka

began establishing goals and objectives for the upcoming year. By focusing on the theme of "OPPI - Your Link to the Planning Profession," we agreed that our main goal for 1996-97 was to address the issue of communication. Some objectives that came out of that goal are: looking at the use of the Internet to reach more members; sending students monthly updates of OPPI-related activities; and a stronger presence in the planning schools.

Since that first meeting we've been busy putting our objectives into action. The student section of the OPPI website has been redesigned, we have sent out a monthly email newsletter known as SPED (Student Planning E-mail Directory), three schools have hosted an OPPI-related event, and the newly established Scholarship Working Group is reviewing the application process and promotion of scholarships.

As we sat around the table and shared ideas a recurring theme kept appearing. That was the need for a stronger communication channel between our current membership and OPPI as an institute. We began to recognize that there were questions that consistently came up at all the schools, such as: What process do I have to follow to become a full member? Are there any benefits to being a member of OPPI if I work in a non-traditional planning field? What are the application requirements for the OPPI



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scholarship and is the award really \$2000? Who do I talk to when I have a question concerning membership? Over the next year you will get answers to these questions and more. This year's committee is committed to

helping students get more out of their memberships. We look forward to the challenge and welcome any comments/suggestions you may have. Remember: "The rewards are just the beginning!"

Gerry is student delegate to OPPI Council. His e-mail address is [gmmelenk@fes.uwaterloo.ca](mailto:gmmelenk@fes.uwaterloo.ca).

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

# Facilitation Skills for Planners Who Lead Groups

By Brian Benn

**E**verybody just sat around the table inspecting their fingernails. A few people had an opinion, but some didn't say anything, and nothing got done."

Sound familiar? Ninety percent of the difference between a good meeting and a bad meeting has to do with the process, not the content. And the difference between a process that works and one that doesn't is often a skilled facilitator.

Planning is not a solitary activity. People want to be involved in planning decisions that will affect them, so the job description for most planners today includes the ability to work with groups effectively to solve problems and make decisions. Essentially, that means holding meetings. However, getting people together does not guarantee that decisions are made or problems and issues get

solved.

Facilitating meetings means helping the group focus not only on what it does, but how it does it. This usually requires a balance between concern for the task to be accomplished and concern for how people interact.

The International Association of Facilitators has identified 14 skills an effective facilitator must have. We'll look at seven of them in this article and the remainder in a future article.

### 1. MASTER THE METHODS

Facilitators may lead small groups or large assemblies, informal discussions, workshops, environmental reviews, public meetings, or community consultations. Each type of even requires different methods that help groups identify and prioritize problems and develop and analyze solutions. Good facilitators know when and how to use brainstorming, force-field analysis, nominal group technique, and other methods to make the particular kind of meeting work.

### 2. DELIVER ON THE DEAL

Facilitation means being open and honest. The facilitator must know when to say no to facilitating a group, especially if there will be no opportunity for open participation.

Groups will sense hidden agendas quickly and facilitated discussion does not work when trust is gone.

### 3. BE BOTH JANITOR AND METRONOME

The selection of environment and the use of time are important to group facilitation. Checking out the space ahead of time is important, to arrange tables and chairs and create open space. Building trust requires interaction and face-to-face communication and the environment can have a strong influence. The facilitator must also sense the rhythm of the group and know when to change the activity or pace of the discussion. Importantly, the facilitator knows how to let

#### DONALD F. EASTON, MCIP, RPP

Scarborough's former planning commissioner, Don Easton, died in October, aged 72. Don received a degree in Forestry from UBC in 1950. His planning career began when he joined the Township of Scarborough, succeeding John Bousfield as Planning Director in 1956. Don directed planning and development in Scarborough during a significant period of urbanization through the 1960s and 1970s. He remained with Scarborough until 1981. For the past 15 years, Don was semi-retired, but continued to practice as a consultant.

Don is fondly remembered by his former colleagues at Scarborough. Don was dedicated to his family and leaves his wife Better, daughters Cathie and Donna, son Douglas and grandchildren, Liane and Kristen. (This appreciation was prepared by Carl Januszczak, who worked with Don at Scarborough.)

#### PROVISIONAL MEMBER DOROTHY FLYNN

Provisional Member Dorothy Flynn died in November. Born in 1955, Dorothy attended high school in Winnipeg and earned her Bachelor of Environmental Studies from the University of Manitoba in 1977. Four years later she joined CIP, holding positions with the City of Vancouver after graduating, and the City of Toronto. She moved to Ottawa in 1989 where she worked as an intermediate planner with the City. Since 1995, Dorothy was working with committee of adjustment applications.

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note down the individual's insights verbatim. Good facilitators focus on what the individual is saying rather than what the facilitator is thinking.

**6. STAY NEUTRAL**

Facilitators are like dispassionate referees who know the importance of maintaining a neutral stance. Facilitators must set aside their personal opinions about the information coming out of the group and recognize the value of group-generated data.

**7. KEEP YOUR ANTENNAE UP**

Facilitators must be skilled in reading the underlying dynamics in the group. In particular, they must be able to interpret the silence of the group, hear when individual axes are being ground and identify hidden agendas. The real skill is being able to bring these agendas to the surface and address them in a constructive and positive manner.

These skills are part of a set that will be presented and practised in the new OPPI workshop "Process Skills for Planners." The workshop will be offered early in 1997.

*Brian Benn has been working as an educator, facilitator and project manager with municipal groups for more than 15 years.*

the group own the time and the task so that they take responsibility for the process.

**4. BE AN "AGENT EVOCATEUR"**

The facilitator is skilful in evoking participation and creativity. Facilitators must believe that the group has the wisdom and creativity needed to deal with the situation. This means knowing how to create a climate that invites participation and moves the group to take responsibility. Eliciting the wisdom of the group is the

essence of effective facilitation. The facilitator must involve the whole group, find ways to draw out the quieter people and push each one in the group to play an active and balanced role.

**5. BE A GOOD LISTENER**

Facilitators must honour the wisdom of all group members and demonstrate this through their interactions with individuals and the group. They must listen carefully to participants' words, accept silence with understanding, maintain eye contact, and

**PEOPLE**

**Patrick Olive, MCIP,  
RPP is Canada's  
Economic  
Developer of the  
Year**

At the September AGM of the *Economic Developers Association of Canada*, held in Sherbrooke, Quebec, Patrick Olive was proclaimed Economic Developer of the Year. The award reflects Pat Olive's involvement in *Durham Region - where he is Commissioner of Economic Development -* as well as his contribution to economic development across Canada and internationally.

The criteria for the award, sponsored by the *Royal Bank*, include having made a substantial contribution to professional development and education; public education concerning the role of economic development; development of strategies to spearhead

major developments; and effective promotion using the media. The purpose of the award program is to recognize professional conduct that promotes jobs and wealth creation. In his acceptance speech, Olive acknowledged the "coordinated team work approach" of staff and colleagues, as well as strong political support from his employers that made winning the award possible.

EDAC has 400 members across the country, working in the public and private sector. Many EDAC members, including Pat Olive, are registered professional planners.

**CITY OF YORK APPOINTS  
NEW PLANNING  
COMMISSIONER**

The bush telegraph was working overtime in mid-October as news of the appointment of Ken Whitwell as the new *Commissioner of Planning at the City of York* quickly spread. The *Journal* received no fewer than six "tips" of the impending, then con-

firmed appointment. The consensus is that Ken is a popular and well considered choice to build on the work started by Ed Sajecki, who is now Commissioner of Planning & Development Services with the City of Burlington. Ed's responsibilities include economic development.

**Pamela Sweet** is the new *Director of Policy and Infrastructure Planning Division at the Region of Ottawa-Carleton*. Her main responsibilities will be for the official plan, the transportation master plan and the water and waste master plans. The division will also be involved in economic development and will undertake the collection and analysis of research data to support those functions. Pamela is a past president of CIP and has been involved in Institute affairs for many years. Another new appointment resulting from the region's recent corporate review process is that of **Barry Edgington**, who has been made

*Director of Development Approvals*. Using the "one window" approach, Barry's responsibilities include a merger of plans administration with current development services and the approvals branch of the Environment and Transportation department. The two other divisions are Geomatics and Property Services. **Nick Tunnacliffe** is *Commissioner of the Planning and Development Approvals Department*.

**Michael Ellis** has taken on a challenging new role with *Oshawa General Hospital*, where he is *Project Coordinator* with responsibilities for the expansion and redevelopment plans for one of the hospital. The lands owned by the hospital potentially play a strategic role in Oshawa's development. Michael's extensive experience in space planning and as a planning consultant with **IBI Group** make him an ideal candidate for this assignment.

*Please send information on People to the OPPI office c/o the Editor.*

