

Giant Tiger looking to Orangeville

Are Orangeville's supermarkets afraid of competition from Giant Tiger?

That might be unlikely but, on the record, one might think so.

According to Jean-Marc Desjarlais, the Ottawa-based director of real estate for Giant Tiger's head office, the company has been looking for a site in Orangeville for at least the last ten years.

"We agree that there is real need for a retailer such as Giant Tiger in the market. So far we have not found any locations that suit all of our needs at the right price. We need to keep our overhead low so that we can continue to offer everyday low prices to our customers," Mr. Desjarlais said in an emailed response.

The company's preference would be for a location vacated by a similar store. There have been such sites in the past decade.

There was the Sobeys' former site in Westdale Plaza at Broadway and Ada. But Sobeys', perhaps with future expansion in mind, had retained its lease on the vacant 30,000 square foot building after it leased or built its present 65-70,000 square foot store at Centennial and Riddell.

Now the former Sobeys' carries that company's FreshCo banner.

Giant Tiger might have considered the former ShopRite location in Fairgrounds Plaza. That site, however, was a former Comisso's, former BigM and former something else, and Wal-Mart is in the process of expanding its grocery department.

Mr. Desjarlais said that Giant Tiger had looked at the former Zellers location.

"In terms of the Zellers, it is our understanding that the owners of the plaza have given the Metro store a covenant that no other grocery retailer is able to lease space within the plaza.

"Selling groceries at our everyday low prices is an integral part of our retail offering to our customers.

"We cannot open a Giant Tiger store without a proper grocery section," he said.

In the meantime, Giant Tiger and Foodland in Shelburne are living comfortably side-by-side and might actually complement each other, if one were to judge by observing traffic at their Shelburne plaza.

By Wes Keller