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Veterans? Associated outraged

Dear editor:

Members of Shelburne's Veterans' Association are outraged at the decision by the County Council to charge ahead with the destruction of our hospital and reconstruct it to accommodate 25 people seeking subsidized rentals. This they describe as affordable housing, affordable because the local taxpayer is saddled with the additional cost

That the greater numbers of Shelburne and district citizens have repeatedly expressed their wish to keep the hospital for its intended purpose, and for which they contributed their hard earned money at the outset is ignored by these politicians, leads us to ask why do the demands of he few,(25) take precedence over the many? What is the driving motive?

It appears that free money from government, $850,000) might be the deciding factor that shifts democracy to the back burner, or it might be that Orangeville, with its weighted vote,. wants to collect every penny that Headwaters can extract from the system, What ever the reasoning at county, it is wrong and undemocratic, and Shelburne should withdraw from County Council, if possible, and take charge of its affairs and priorities. Where is Shelburne's voice in this process?

Surely the care and treatment of the veterans who suffer the combat consequences of serving our nation and now carry the scars in the form of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder should be recognized and given first priority, that is if the community at large gives a damn about these suffering Canadians. Certainly in any community there are people who need care and reasonable accommodations, providing they are not the authors of their own problems.. It remains that those men and women who have suffered while serving our country should NOT be relegated to second place.

Unfortunately the $850,000 available from government for affordable housing captures the attention of politicians and affects their decision making capabilities, but why it has driven them to destroying our only hospital which is desperately needed by so many in this area is an enigma. Why destroy a perfectly good structure when other non-destructive options are available, options that would be less costly and offer far better living accommodations than those proposed for the hospital? Who with his or her brains intact would even consider tearing apart a perfectly good medical structure that could serve the healthcare requirements of a growing community and neighborhood? It boggles the mind!

The demand for affordable housing units is reported to be significantly greater than the 25 people registered for them now and if this is so it is recommended that negotiations with a builder be commenced to establish a construction plan which will determine the shape and size of the needed homes, where they should be located and how to secure financial relief for the builder.

If that cannot work then consider the cheap route; subsidizing the rents in the places the applicants now live. That would shake a few of them out of their dependency and force them to find work.

Sherry Teeler, manager of the Mel Lloyd, has stated that additional construction will be required at that site to meet demand. Why then not build affordable lousing units there and leave the hospital for its intended use? Clearly, this issue should have been referred to the general Shelburne area public for their opinion if democracy is still alive in Dufferin.

We are unsure of our mayor's position regarding this game-changing issue but we consider that he should be fighting tooth and nail to stop the destruction of our hospital, and we are concerned that some of the applicants for this subsidized housing could be from places other than Dufferin.

The Shelburne Veterans' Association