

All proposals for highway link called

More than 60 Brantford Township residents crowded the cramped council chambers Monday night to discuss a proposed multi-million-dollar highway west of Brantford.

Spokesman Eugene Gryski of Oakhill Drive asked council to consider long and hard before making a final decision on the route for the highway.

About a month ago, preliminary plans were unveiled for the \$15.1-million highway. Five possible routes were presented by consultants hired by the city, and the township.

All the routes would begin at Mount Pleasant Street and the Brantford Southern Access Road, sweep north near the Oakhill subdivision, run parallel to Jennings Road, cross the Grand River, and join Oak Park Road near Highway 403.

The roadway would link two large parcels of land to be annexed to the city Jan. 1. One parcel of 1,600 acres southwest of the city in the Shellard Lane district is to be developed as a residential area.

The annexation agreement signed earlier this year by the city, the county, and the township stipulated that a corridor would be provided between the two areas.

Although township residents have been assured by both local and provincial politicians that the highway plans are only tentative and that it could be several years before it is built, the ratepayers want the proposal stopped now.

In presenting to council a petition signed by 93 township residents, Mr. Gryski thanked Reeve Robert Kennedy and Deputy Reeve Jack Clark for their firmness and determination, and resulting success, in protecting that part of the township from annexation.

"We realize this kind of negotiation is demanding and exhausting for the individuals concerned, and the resulting agreement, particularly with the location of the proposed industrial area, shows you have served our municipality well," he said.

Mr. Gryski said the group's concern was with the part of the agreement con-

cerning the transportation and service corridor between the proposed residential area, and the industrial area proposed to the northwest.

He said the group accepted the fact that this item was agreed upon in good-faith negotiations and now was provincial law.

"We have no dispute with the proposed route of the service corridor. Properly installed, it will not have an effect on the landscape or the quality of life, and the most direct route is obviously the most economical. It is the transportation link with which we are concerned," he said.

Mr. Gryski said the group found all five routes identified by the consultants unacceptable and unnecessary.

"Any of these routes will necessitate destruction of houses, defacement of the landscape, defiling of the environment with noise and fumes, and disruption of the quality of life to the extent that the horrors of being annexed to the city have only been replaced by this rape of our community."

He said the cost involved — about \$25 million, including \$17 million for the transportation route — would be disproportionate to the benefits. ✕

Mr. Gryski said council should drop the plans for a highway, and instead consider extending Blossom Avenue to Highway 24.

"We feel the completion of Blossom Avenue through to the Pleasant Ridge Road and on to Highway 24 with a similar standard of road would fulfil the terms of this agreement.

"It would further encourage workers in both the Braneida and Cainsville industrial areas to live there, as they would merely have to use the exits for their areas off Highway 403, and eliminate a drive through the city," he said.

This proposal would not necessitate the destruction of any houses at all and no long-established communities would be disrupted, he said, and he predicted that the provincial Environmental Assessment Board would be less likely to reject this route.

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would be considerably cheaper, said Mr. Gryski — "less than \$1 million dollars, as opposed to \$17 million which none of the parties involved can afford to pay."

He called the Grand River Valley one of Brant County's richest resources, and said it should be used to enhance the quality of life there, not be disfigured by asphalt, concrete, and a befouled atmosphere, with wildlife chased away by noise.

Mr. Gryski questioned the assumption that development and occupancy of the industrial park would be complete by the year 2010.

"We are having a most difficult time keeping open the industries we now have, and we do not know on what basis an engineering firm can say we can fill a huge industrial park in 29 years," he said.

Several other township residents also spoke, but most made the same points as Mr. Gryski.

→ Patricia Fedak of 59 Sky Acres Drive said that if the township put through the proposed highway, it would be a contradiction of the "Foodland

Guidelines" which it had previously endorsed and adopted. She said existing roads could be made suitable for the transportation corridor.

George Aslin of Oakhill Drive said he thought the city should build a bridge from the end of St. Paul Avenue to link with Shellard Lane.

After the almost two-hour presentation, Reeve Kennedy told the group no decision had yet been made.

"We haven't even discussed these routes in this council, let alone with the city," he said.

"All we have done is hear the engineers' report and questioned them on their choices.

"The Municipal Act requires us all to agree on a route. Failing that, the minister would appoint an arbitrator to report to the provincial cabinet," which would impose a decision.

Deputy Reeve Jack Clark said no road would be built until a need was shown.

All members of council said they endorsed the group's stand, and promised to keep them informed.

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