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Riverview develops taste for business

HF-Development

Riverview has had more problems than its two neighbouring municipalities over the years in attracting commercial development.

It has had no problems, however, in attracting large numbers of residents to public meetings to voice their opposition against even the most innocuous of business proposals.

The supreme example occurred several years ago when a number of citizens showed up in council to oppose construction of a funeral home in their area, saying it would be disruptive. Not to sound morbid, but what could be quieter than a funeral home?

In more recent times, following a myriad of conditions placed on their rezoning proposal by area residents, the developers of a music conservatory for Riverview announced they would henceforth look at locating the facility elsewhere.

Although it appeared for awhile that Riverview, despite the rezoning restrictions, had managed to work its way back into the lead for the conservatory, Juergens Weiland, who would be its managing director, and his wife Melody Dobson, its artistic director, confirmed about a week ago that they had been offered a deal for the project that is "too good" to refuse.

"It is a very, very good offer, more than anything we could have hoped for," Dobson told me, but declined to reveal the source of the offer until the details are finalized. But reliable sources leave no doubt in my mind the offer is from the City of Dieppe.

However, my column today is not aimed at how Riverview has lost out on commercial opportuni-

ties over the years, but on some positives currently taking place in the town that will hopefully set it on the opposite course.

Perhaps the almost certain demise of the music conservatory deal for the community was the last straw for the majority of residents, because the Riverview candidates who ran on pro-development platforms are the ones who emerged successful during the May 10 municipal election.

One of the new councillors is Coun.-at-large Sherry Wilson, president of the Riverview Downtown Business Association. Not only did she completely revamp the group, but has been a strong, consistent voice for Riverview's business community.

Also, on the positive side, Brenda Orchard, the town's director of corporate services and economic development, tells me that the study by C. B. Richard Ellis Ltd. — hired by the municipality last November to conduct a retail marketing assessment of Riverview — has been completed. She said its mandate was to identify strategies for attracting retail development.

When the consultant's report was finished, she said those recommendations were presented to about 10 to 12 prominent local business owners for their input.

At the same time, Orchard contacted colleagues in North Bay, Ont., a community which had just won a national award for its retail