



## **Citizens trying to save tree**

By Christine Trott, The Herald Weekend Edition, Vol. 12, No. 42 August 25, 2000 Alliston ON

A tree estimated to be at least 200 years old is standing its ground. Controversy surrounding the proposed clearing of one of the town's oldest trees is being resolved as the town, the Ministry of Transportation and the Arbour Committee work on a solution that will ease traffic woes and save a tree. "In my view, the tree is saved." George DeGroot, head of public works for New Tecumseth said. "The only issue is how we do it."

The Burr Oak that has become an obstacle to development at the corner of King and Young streets could be as old as 400 years old according to one estimate. Initially, the town planned to remove the tree to allow for the widening of King Street but changed that decision after hearing protests and concern from a number of residents. "It's considered priceless," said Shauneen Mackay, a member of the Arbour Committee. Although Mackay said she only became aware of the decision to bring the tree down recently, she moved quickly to bring the issue to the attention of councillor Aiden Whalen.

Working with staff and Ainley and Associates, Whelan said a plan to save the tree is in the works. With the agreement of the MTO the road will be shifted one metre to the west, which will help protect the tree's root structure.

"The consultants have been instructed to redesign the intersection," DeGroot said, adding all work immediately around the tree has been put on hold until arborist John Northwood, who works on the town's Arbour Committee, can assess the root structure of the tree and help devise a plan that will protect it. "The goal is to work around the tree and save it."

As it stands, the plan includes hand-tooling the root system using a suctioning tool, but DeGroot maintains that until Northwood is able to make his assessment, the feasibility of the plan remains unknown. Since Northwood will have to implement the work around the tree, redesign plans remain somewhat contingent on his assessment. "It will take a while," DeGroot said.

**For up-to-date information on this project contact Mr. Paul Cadieux**  
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