

Rest home open house to counter demonstration

Residents of a James Bay retirement home will have an open house on Saturday afternoon to counter a demonstration held last Sunday by James Bay homeowners.

Sunday's march in the Battery Street area was in support of retaining family neighborhoods and heritage homes in James Bay.

It was sparked by a plan by developer and nursing home owner John Hanrahan to demolish two homes on Battery Street to extend his Niagara Street nursing home.

Initially Hanrahan said the 138 residents in his James Bay facilities would hold their own demonstration. That idea was scrapped in favor of the open house, with invitations to all the neighbors.

"We love our neighbors. Why should we march on them?" Hanrahan said.

"We shouldn't have this sort of confrontation. If the city decides to freeze the whole area (with a blanket heritage development permit designation) I will simply move to another area."

The open house will be held at Douglas House, 50 Douglas St., and it is likely there will also be signs such as "One day you might need a rest home," Hanrahan said.

Five people on Battery Street and Niagara Street have recently offered to sell their homes to Hanrahan. Three offers were made this week, he said.

Hanrahan owns 648 Battery St. and has offered to sell it if any of the people wanting to save the house will come up with \$100,000. The house is on the heritage registry but is not designated.

Tonight city council will consider an

application by Hanrahan for a demolition permit on the house.

The staff recommendation is for work on the house to be put on hold for 30 days and the application to be considered by the heritage advisory committee.

In a report to council, planning officer Brian Sikstrom said: "Council may wish to advise the owner that any rezoning of this site is contrary to council's land use policies for the area."

Hanrahan said this week he has also made an offer on 642 Battery St. and he has others pending.

The nursing homes, retirement homes and serviced apartments for elderly people provide jobs in the area and as they are private, no government grants are needed, Hanrahan said.