

Busing distances for new school concern parents

By Jack Evans

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COLBORNE CHRONICLE

Cramahe Township parents support the concept of a new school, but they also worry about increased long-distance busing for elementary aged pupils.

Those were the main thoughts expressed by about 25 parents to the large Castleton and South Cramahe Public Schools Pupil Accommodation Review Committee at a public meeting in the South Cramahe School Feb. 20.

The committee includes parent and resident members from both schools plus Kawartha-Pine Ridge District School Board officials, led by Sherry Summersides, associate director of education.

Ms. Summersides reviewed that the present committee of about 20 members, is the second attempt to resolve the local school issues. An earlier recommendation from the board to consolidate the two schools and send some students into a new, larger school in the Municipality of Brighton was stoutly opposed by most parents in the areas involved.

She added that parents preferred a rural school setting to sending their children to more urban areas like Brighton or Colborne. She also affirmed that recent news reports about consolidating all rural Cramahe pupils at Brighton were in error, apparently based on the earlier recommendation.

She said the new proposal is a window of opportunity to take advantage of capital funding available from the ministry of education to build a new school and to build one of reasonable size would require joining the two school bodies into one. She denied that Castleton has already been decided as the site.

The much smaller acreage at the present South Cramahe coupled with hazard lands

and a sharp slope probably preclude using that site, she suggested.

The meeting was also told that with most of the land in the area designated as prime agriculture, a suitable "green area" site to build part way between the two and get approval for rezoning would be difficult.

Meanwhile, the present Castleton School, with a site of more than nine acres, is adequate. Ms. Summersides has placed the possible closing of the two schools at the top of the agenda for the next meeting at Castleton Public School on Monday, March 3 at 6:30 p.m. She stressed at the February 20 meeting that this is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to build a new school in this area.

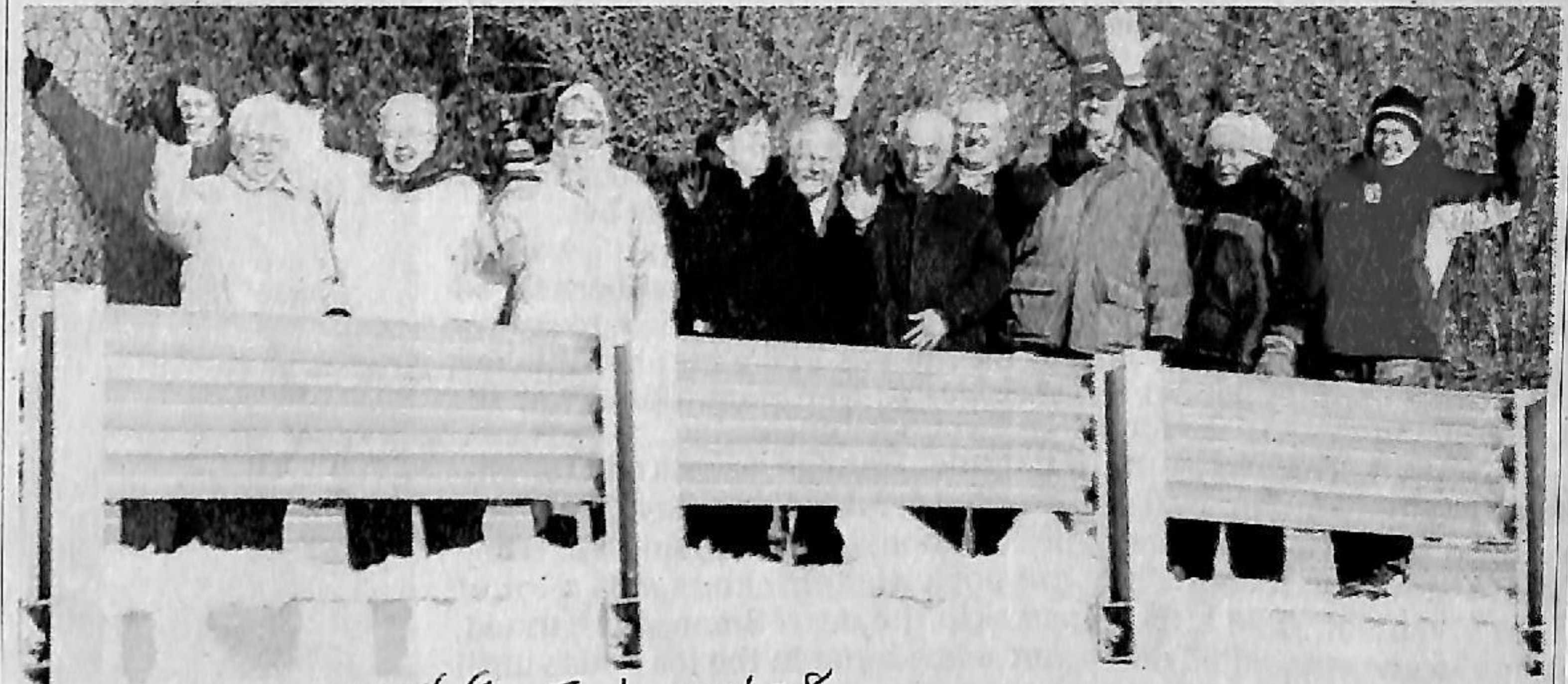
One parent said she lives in the extreme southeast corner of Cramahe and it would be much closer for her three boys to go to Brighton or Spring Valley. She and several other parents expressed the hope that school boundaries could be redrawn so parents could send their children to closer schools.

Ms. Summersides said the board has a policy of a maximum one-hour bus ride to schools and all pupils involved would easily fit within that maximum regardless of where the school might be located.

Repairs to either or both the present schools were also ruled out as options because of the way the provincial funding offer is worded.

Ms. Summersides stressed that the board continues to rely on the final decision from the committee, and opportunities for more input and suggestions will continue with meetings set for Castleton Public School on Monday, March 3 at 6:30 p.m. and South Cramahe again on Thursday, April 10 at 6:30 p.m.. She said the public may also attend the meeting of the board, probably in June, when the committee's final report will be presented.

MUTTON BRIDGE IS NOW COMPLETED!



CHRYSIDE Feb. 21/08

PHOTO BY BOB OWEN

It's now open officially. Dignitaries and staff were on hand with area residents for the official opening of Mutton Bridge on February 15. From left, are Lesley Owen, Ruth Chapman, Germaine James, Cramahe Director of Development Becky Bonisteel, Cramahe Chief Administrative Officer Christie Alexander, G.D. Jewell engineer Wayne Patterson, Northumberland-Quinte West MPP Lou Rinaldi, Cramahe Director of Public Works Barry Thrasher, Northumberland-Quinte West Rick Norlock, Cramahe Deputy Mayor Jim Williams, Cramahe Mayor Marc Coombs. Absent from the photo but at the bridge Beryl Mutton and David Mutton.

BOOK DONATION FOR LIBRARY

Ferne Dobson, right, donates a signed copy of Dale Goldhawk's latest book, *Getting What You Deserve*, to Cramahe Library chief executive officer Sue LaBerge. Mrs. Dobson approached the author and advocate for the little guy at a presentation he made in Cobourg and asked for a copy for the Cramahe libraries. She presented it to the Cramahe Library Board at its monthly meeting February 20. CHRONICLE Feb. 25/08

PHOTO BY BOB OWEN

