

The Acton Free Press

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Shopping mall proposal presented to council

Detailed proposal for creation of a pleasant shopping mall in Acton presented as expected by Ted Tyler Jr. at Council Tuesday, was referred to four other groups for study. The development commission, Chamber of Commerce, No. 2 Committee of council and the half-hour-old new planning board will all have an opportunity to comment on and question personal proposal of the councillor.

Photostated copies of the presentation and map (as appearing in the Free Press) were available for all council and the press. The presentation reads:

Why a shopping Mall? The downtown shopping area of Acton is deteriorating and has been for some years. The south side of Mill Street with its empty stores is particularly noticeable, especially to visitors and prospective industrialists. Downtown shopping in other district communities eg. Georgetown, Milton and even Erin is much better than in Acton and the merchants in these communities seem to be prospering. Many people in Acton it seems, prefer to shop in Guelph, Kitchener or these other areas. The reason for this lies probably in part with the town and the physical facilities in the downtown area and probably in part with the merchants for not getting together to try and improve matters. The time is ripe for the town to tackle its share of the problems in hopes that a better customer climate will help to boost the morale of the downtown merchants.

I would like to quote Time Magazine (July 28/67) and the Greek planner Constantinos Doxiadis "The car must be curbed if cities are to be made human again." "For the first time in history - since he came down from the trees, man is losing the right to walk inside his cities." "Several cities - Philadelphia, Washington, Houston and Minneapolis - either have or are planning pedestrian malls."

Here in Canada, we have Yorkdale Mall and Cloverdale Mall, the first an indoor mall and the second an outdoor mall, both in Toronto and less than an hour drive from Acton. Hamilton also has shopping malls. Kitchener and Ottawa have streets closed off to make pedestrian malls.

What Acton needs is shopping services in its downtown area which boast of something different and attractive: Something to interest Acton and rural shoppers and attract customers who now go elsewhere. Anyone who has been to Expo 67 can testify to the lively atmosphere and interest of the malls and shopping areas there. They are completely free of automobile traffic and buyers can shop about from store to store without the problem of waiting long minutes to get from one side of the street to the other in safety. What Acton needs is a downtown shopping area which will attract people to it just to see what is going on and to meet and talk and shop in less crowded and quieter surroundings than they have now.

I would like to submit that the mall proposal introduced in my resolution is perhaps one of the most promising solutions to our downtown problems.

If the mall proposal is adopted it will only be successful with proper planning to set it up. Four steps must be taken to make it work.

1. Highway 7 must be rerouted around the downtown area and traffic patterns in this area altered.
2. Adequate parking must be supplied for shoppers in the mall area.
3. The mall must be interestingly and attractively designed.
4. The merchants must take stock of their appearance, selling techniques and service and improve these where necessary.

Some merchants will no doubt worry about loss of highway trade if No. 7 bypasses the downtown area. They are mistaken. I think, if they believe much traffic stops on Acton's drab Main Street with its impossible parking, to shop. Whether or not a mall is established Highway 7 is going to be rerouted in very few years and something of a benefit might as well be derived from this. Think what an enticement it would be to traffic entering Acton to have a sign welcoming them to Acton's

Downtown Mall - "The only Mall in Halton County" - with lots of parking. I think that out of sheer curiosity a great many would stop to investigate and if they liked what they saw they would stay to shop and what is more important, they would probably return.

The re-routing of Highway 7 and alteration of traffic patterns might be carried out as follows:

Bypass: Highway 7 traffic should be routed down Eastern Ave. to Bower Ave. and an overpass constructed at the railway crossing on Eastern Ave. (While this is being done the present Young Street route could be used). Bower Ave. would be extended along the CNR right of way as a no access bypass to the intersection of Highways 7 and 25 at Main and Guelph Streets. The old Coleman property would have to be acquired and a lot at the other end of the bypass along with some school property and some other private property. The bypass would not be accessible from the main part of Bower Ave. and would be the shortest and fastest route between the easterly and westerly part of the town. Stop lights would be moved to Main and Guelph Street corner at the intersection of Highways 25 and 7 and a railway underpass constructed at the CNR crossing in this area.

Other Streets: Elgin Street from Church Street, one way only (north), a fast route from the south industrial area to the post office. John Street, one way only (south), this would provide adequate facilities for the Funeral Home and an easy way to the south industrial area. Mill Street, one way (west), to Victoria Street. This would eliminate a dangerous crossing at Mill and Park Ave. Park Ave., one way only (north). Knox Ave., one way only (east).

2. Parking: Parking must be supplied for prospective customers in the mall and it must be reasonably close. This means establishment of some sort of municipally owned parking lot. Property on the north side of Church Street from the corner lot on Main Street to and including the corner lot on Church and Willow could be acquired. This would give a large parking lot which could have customer entrances to the stores on the south side of Mill Street. A service lane would be left clear of parking along the rear of these stores to permit deliveries to them and give access to the depot taxi and bus stop. Busses would proceed here from Highway 7 by coming down Church Street.

Other service lanes for the business places on Mill Street would have to be established. There could be a lane between Willow and John Streets behind the old post office and YMCA. A service lane is already in existence behind the stores on the north side of Mill Street between Main and Willow.

The properties around the town hall might be acquired. This could become a parking lot, especially needed for the police offices and fire hall and a service lane could be established through it between Willow and John.

3. Design of the Mall: Some sort of professional assistance would be needed here to ensure a satisfactory plan. There should be trees, perhaps flowers in tubs or on lamp posts, benches to sit on and adequate room for the pedestrian shoppers to walk. It might be possible to have a fountain of some sort at the present Mill and Willow intersection and perhaps this could become a sort of Civic Square where municipal celebrations of one type or another might be held. All of this designed to arouse the curiosity and attract people to the downtown area.

4. Merchants: Previously mentioned No. 4 is the answer.

In conclusion, I would like to say that this all sounds very nice and visionary and we as municipal officials must always be faced with cold hard facts of feasibility and cost. But I think we must also ask ourselves this question: "What is going to happen to our downtown area if we do nothing?" Can any of you answer the question with any degree of optimism after looking at the present condition in the downtown area?



"I DUB Thee Sir John A. MacDonald!" Emily Hodgson, as Queen Victoria, got the regal task of tilling Glen Widowski at playground closing Thursday. Father of Confederation Ralph Landsborough adjusts his tie for formality. Leader Kathy Krul wrote the skit. (Staff Photo)

Workshop, garage destroyed by fire

About 6 a.m. Saturday morning fire was detected in a 30 by 40 foot frame workshop-garage at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Norman Turner near Churchill. The building, its tools and equipment, were completely destroyed. A newly-purchased, second hand truck, parked just outside the building, received \$550 damage.

Mr. Turner conducts his contracting business from his home. The nearby house and main shop, within 20 feet of the fire, were saved. Acton firefighters extinguished the fire, which was spread by exploding paint. Mr. Turner assisted the firefighters using some of his own equipment.

Grade 13 results released today

Acton District High School, Grade 13 Examination results were released Wednesday morning by principal Ted Hansen.

Arlic, Daniel P. - Eng. 59, Chem. 50.
Barber, Wayne - Eng. 56.
Clarke, Susan E. - Eng. 84, Math.

A 76, Math. B 71, Biol. 76, Phys. 80, Chem. 73, French 61.
Cooke, Elizabeth J. - Eng. 58, Geog. 59, Biol. 58, Chem. 54, French 50.

Denny, LeVerne L.S. - Eng. 57, Geog. 75, French 50.
Garrett, Douglas S. - Math. A 55, Biol. 54, Phys. 52.

Gay, Geoffrey - Math. A 51.
Harris, I. Merl - Eng. 79, Math. A 72, Math. B 52, Biol. 79, Phys. 64, Chem. 67.
Heard, Eleanor E. - Eng. 80, Biol. 66, Chem. 65, Latin 68, French 71.

Hoey, Martha J. - Eng. 64, Hist. 60, Geog. 73, French 50.

Kranendonk, Chris A. - Hist. 69, Biol. 56.

Landsborough, Joanne E. - Eng. 76, Math. A 64, Math. B 53, Biol. 56, Chem. 59, French 59.

Linhart, Linda J. - Geog. 67, Chem. 61, French 51.
Mathews, Ralph L. - Biol. 52.

McCrea, Rita L. - Eng. 88, Hist. 68, Geog. 73, Biol. 73, Chem. 60, French 65.

McKenzie, E. Kathryn - Eng. 66, Hist. 62, Geog. 55, Biol. 65, French 50.

Perry, Franklin R. - Math. A 62, Biol. 51, Chem. 54.

Winter, Nancy G.E. - Eng. 75, Math. A 82, Math. B 82, Biol. 60, Chem. 69, French 77.

Withers, K. Gayle - Eng. 65, Math. A 58, Biol. 54, Chem. 55, Latin 53, French 53.

Final reading zoning by-law

Third and final reading was given to the town's zoning bylaw at the council meeting Tuesday evening, after being in the process of making for three years.

An amendment was passed after discussion about the advisability of full blocks back of the commercial area being zoned commercial.

The amendment specified the area from the railroad tracks on Mill, Church and Bower be zoned as in the previous zoning bylaw with the residential area as R3; the present commercial area by C1 and the area encompassed by Willow from Bower to St. Alban's Drive and St. Alban's Dr. from Willow to Main be R3.

The zoning bylaw will go to the minister of Municipal Affairs; a public hearing will be held by the Ontario Municipal Board in Acton when the bylaw will be gone over, item by item.

Although council was not all in agreement with the amendment, all agreed the bylaw should not be held up any longer.

Council hears mall proposal

After the presentation, Reeve Bert Hinton commented, "He's done something no other councillor has done in the way of original thought in this field."

Although councillor Tyler had no information on widening or re-routing of Highway 7, he said he believed it was inevitable. "From Guelph to Georgetown is the worst piece of highway in Ontario", opined councillor Earl Masales.

Members agreed the proposal should receive further study.

All councillors were present for the lengthy meeting in the smoke-filled room - Mayor Duby, Reeve Hinton, Deputy Reeve Oakes, councillors Williams, Tyler, Drinkwater, McKenzie, Perry and Masales with clerk Jack McGeachie.

More get forms housing survey

Several persons received extra housing needs questionnaires from the town office this week. Answers to the survey are mailed directly to Toronto.

About 350 Acton tenants received the questionnaires in the mail, but any others interested in public rental housing were asked to obtain forms at the municipal office. Only one was given out the first week, but business was slightly brisker the second week.

Flower lover?

Monday evening the large pot of flowers at the door of Morris Pharmacy was taken by a man in a passing car. The theft was seen, the man apprehended and a charge laid by Acton O.P.P.

County assessor system explained to Esquesing

The operation of a county assessment commissioner system was explained in detail to members of Esquesing Township Council on Monday evening.

County assessor Robert Beach, at the suggestion of County Council, is visiting each municipal council in Halton to outline the proposal that is presently being studied by the county's finance and assessment committee.

Within the next few weeks Mr. Beach will explain it to each council so they can give some direction to their county representatives for a vote at the county level - possibly this fall.

Main benefits of a county-wide assessing system, he said, are a more uniform assessment on all properties, the implementation of data processing, a more equitable cost-sharing between municipalities, and the switch to a new assessing manual.

An electric data processing unit would be purchased immediately to compute all assessments and set up tax rolls for each municipality, Mr. Beach explained. In the second year of a county assessing operation, the assessors could begin to switch over to a new assessing manual which bases assessments on the current (1966) resale value - not the 1940 base level which is presently in use.

To date 28 of Ontario's 34 counties and districts have changed from the local assessor system to a county set-up.

Present assessing staff through Halton would be employed by the county department, working in various municipalities whenever they are needed. For the benefit of ratepayers with queries, staffers could give guidance in local offices in each municipality on a certain day each week. Sub-offices would probably be established in Oakville

and Burlington, where around 75 per cent of the county's total properties are located.

Provincial grants will assist in getting the new system started, he explained. The province pays \$10,500 toward salaries, plus 50 per cent of equipment purchases and about 50 per cent of the cost of implementing the data processing unit.

Reeve George Leslie, who is a member of the county committee studying the proposal, said he had visited Peel and Waterloo Counties with the committee to see the system in operation. Officials in these counties described

it as superior to the former system, and "it sounded good enough for me", he said.

"Assessment is the mainstay of any municipality. If you are not doing it right, you are not doing anything right," continued the reeve.

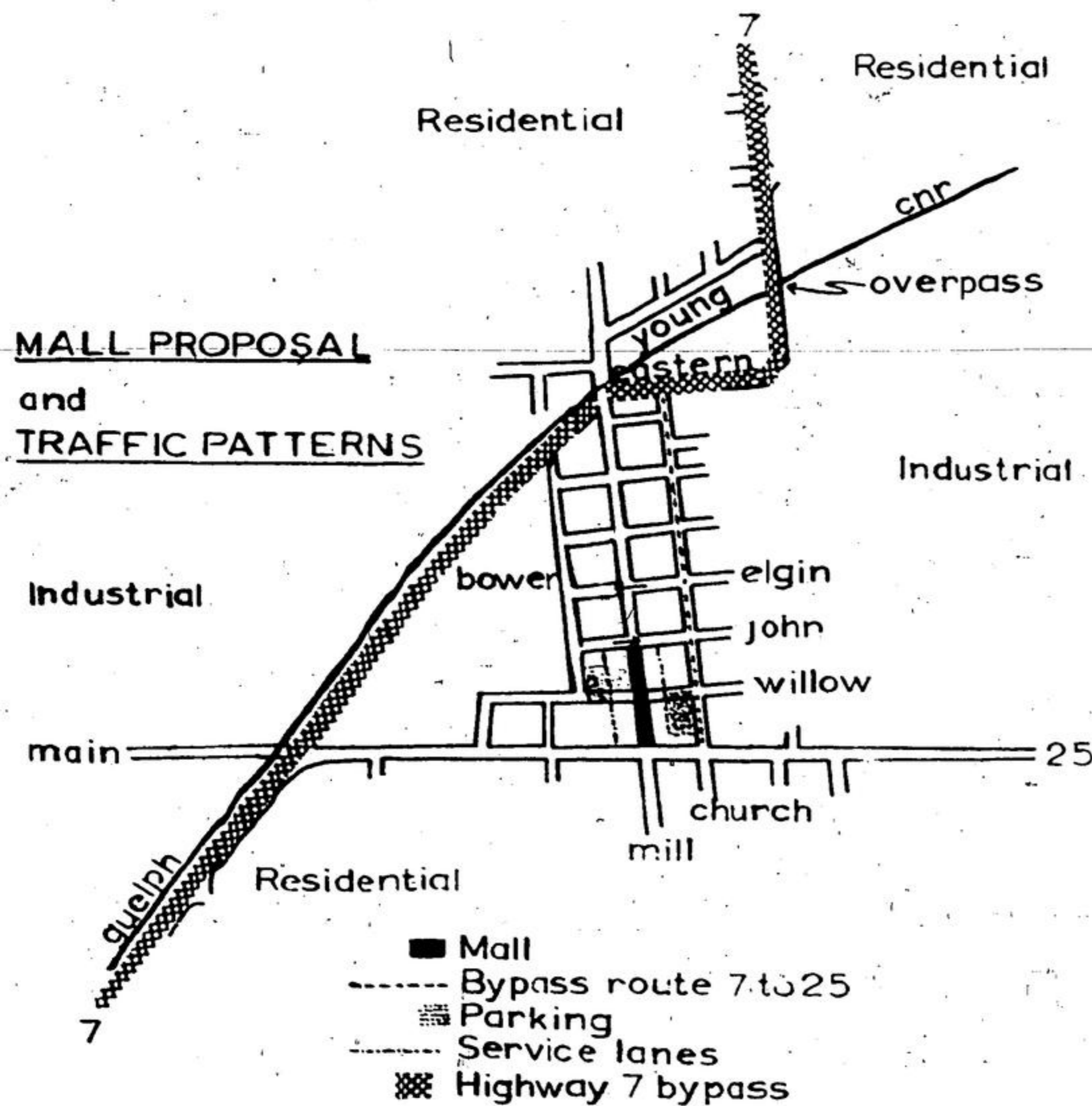
The discussion ended on costs, which are still unknown. Mr. Beach suggested the system would probably cost more than the present set-up, but the resulting better service should be worth any extra cost. He said the county's studying committee would probably look more fully into the costs.

Reformed church new minister to be ordained

Rev. Peter Brouwer has accepted a call to serve as pastor of Beth-El Christian Reformed Church. He completed his studies at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, last spring, and will be ordained here in September.

Mr. Brouwer went from Brampton to study at Calvin College. He is married and has six children. The family will move into the church parsonage in a couple of weeks. The house is up for sale, and if it is sold, the church officials plan to build a new home beside the church for the minister and his family.

During the summer, Calvin College student Dirk Veldhuizen, his wife and children have been in Acton while Mr. Veldhuizen has the duties of temporary minister. They are leaving this week.



BOTTOM OF FAIRY Lake comes spewing out of pipe into a settling bed, as dredging began last Friday. Watching the workmen in a new spectator sport in Acton. To see how the stone-laden silt is sucked up into the pipe, turn to page 3. (Staff Photo)