

COUNCIL CUTS TAXES 2.4 MILLS

Commercial rate slashed 3.2

Home owners will pay 2.4 mills less in taxes this year while the commercial and industrial levy has been reduced 3.2 mills, Acton council decided at a special budget meeting Thursday night.

Council set the residential rate at 82.6 mills and the commercial and industrial levy at 92.3 after a two hour discussion of the proposed budget from an assessment figure \$500,000 above last year's. Mill rates in 1969 were 85 residential and 95.5 commercial and industrial.

A home owner with a \$3,500 assessment who paid \$297.50 for 1969 taxes will get a reduction of \$8.40 this year with 2.6 mills cut off the tax rate. The average taxpayer in Acton paid \$277 in taxes last year, according

to provincial government figures. Clerk-administrator Joe Hurst pointed out assessment in Acton varied widely from the newer subdivision houses to smaller housing in older sections of town, so it would be difficult to get an average assessment.

Big reduction in 1970 was a six mill drop in education costs, much of it the result of a \$20,000 over levy last year which finance chairman Reeve Frank Oakes reminded council still did not bring the educational levy to

the point it was two years ago when the county board took over.

The levy from the county is up slightly—rising from 5.9 mills to 6.2. Since the county has taken over the administration of welfare in 1970, Reeve Oakes felt this margin made up the difference.

Council went over the general rate, the one area they still have some control over—item by item—before deciding on a 33.8 rate for residential and 38.8 for commercial and

industrial which is up over three mills from last year's 30.5 and 35.7 for residential and commercial, respectively.

Over the objections of Councillor Peter Marks, chairman of Parks and Recreation, council slashed both the projected parks and recreation budget, taking one mill away from general operations, and another mill from proposed \$21,000 in repairs to the community centre which engineers have declared would bring it up to safety standards.

The finance committee slashed \$3,500 off community centre operations budget, \$1,000 off parks operation and another \$4,000 off the capital budget proposed for developing the parks.

Another \$700 was pared off the library budget, reducing it to \$16,300 from \$17,000.

"In spite of the good work done by the budget committee of parks and recreation, the finance committee (of council) felt the entire parks and recreation budget was high for our town," chairman Frank Oakes declared, "a tremendous amount for our people."

Parks budget was up \$3,400 from last year and recreation requested \$7,000 more which the finance committee felt was too high in view of the requested arena repair bill of \$21,000.

Taking a mill away from general operations and another from arena repairs, the chairman expressed the hope that the parks and recreation program could still carry on. (A full report of the debate on this issue is carried elsewhere in this issue).

Large increase in the general rate this year was \$18,000 additional for the police budget over which council has no control. The increase in assessment of half a million dollars was more than used up, the reeve stated.

Councillor Orv Chapman was complimented for his handling of the firefighter budget and for the liaison between the brigade and council. "If the firefighters weren't so co-operative there could have been a 30 to 40 per cent increase like some other municipalities," Mr. Chapman said.

Roads in town will receive \$30,400 this year with another \$10,150 for miscellaneous road treatment and \$10,100 for equipment. Sidewalks will receive \$15,000 consisting of \$8,000 to complete last year's program and \$7,000 for new work.

Deputy Reeve Ted Tyler said the committee decided to carry on the same priorities approved by council last year. It was underlined by Councillor Masales that sidewalks to the proposed Senior Citizens' development on Cobblehill Rd. was one of the priorities which council would be obligated to honor.

Council passed the budget on a unanimous vote after further discussion and a reminder from the deputy-reeve directed to Councillor Marks that he personally also objected strongly to one item on the budget but still intended to vote for it.

"I hope you do too," he stressed. Councillor Marks assented agreeing it was "always nice to lower the mill rate" for the best interests of everyone in town, expressing his reservations about parks and recreation cuts, however. He asked council to send a letter to parks and recreation committee explaining the cuts, which he felt would also improve relations between the two bodies.

"It is certainly in order," replied finance chairman Oakes.

Summing up, Mayor Les Duby said council had no recourse but to hold the mill rate in conjunction with increased assessment and increases in costs.

"We were duty bound to come up with a decrease. Cut backs were not intended to oppose programs but in some areas proposed budgets were a little rich for our blood."

"I'd like to thank Dr. Oakes, our finance and budget chairman. He always does a fine job." He gave special thanks to clerk-administrator Joe Hurst who worked extremely well both with his staff and the various committees to have the figures ready.

(A full breakdown of the budget appears inside).

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Will pursue possibility Acton drop-in centre

A drop-in centre for Acton will be considered by a committee headed by grade 13 student Hazel Eastwood, following a special meeting in the high school Monday evening. The meeting, arranged by guidance teacher Brian Skerrett as sixth of the Family Life series, had very disappointing attendance as far as Mr. Skerrett was concerned.

Although 246 students polled had indicated they would like a drop in centre, just 75 people attended the meeting, more than half of them adults. In the same poll, 253 students had said recreation facilities were inadequate while 43 thought they were adequate.

After an introductory session, the meeting broke up into four groups, held animated discussion of pros and cons, and then returned to talk over the conclusions and place more questions.

Giving first-hand advice were 10 visitors. One of them gave new direction to the meeting, as it drew to a limp end with no conclusions with a challenge to the 25 students present to "grab" the "sympathetic" adults and "hang on for dear life." Meet with them right away to set up a committee and set a date for another meeting, she urged.

This new meeting fell together moments later as many headed for home, but some shifted into a classroom for even more concrete plans.

"Don't put yourselves down so much, kids!" said a Guelph social worker. "Tell the adults what you want, and expect to spend a lot of time getting organized."

Leading the discussions were Mrs. Peg Palmer, Oakville, of the addiction research centre; Mrs. Gloria Tomlinson, Oakville, a volunteer worker with the drop-in centre there and a

member of the board of directors of Trailer, an organization to aid drug users; Judy Campbell, a Guelph social worker who is in charge of the drop-in centre there; Dan McLean, an Oakville teacher associated with the drop-in



DONALD A. BROWN
New lawyer opens office

Donald Brown, B.A. LL.B., will open a law practice in offices at the corner of Mill and Main Streets tomorrow (Thursday).

Mr. Brown was called to the bar in a ceremony March 19 at the O'Keefe Centre, after completing a six months bar admission course at Osgoode Hall.

The new lawyer received his B.A. at Waterloo Lutheran University and graduated from Queen's University School of Law in 1968.

He articulated with the firm of Borden, Elliott, Keiley and Palmer in Toronto. Mr. Brown is single.

centre there, Jim Hoshko, Mississauga parks and recreation and drop-in associate; Bert Engels, Oakville student, Adele Hurley, Oakville, Dave Simmons, Oakville and Rod Watson, Brampton.

Acton high school math teacher John Cristello also joined the resource people for the evening.

Reporting back to the general meeting, all four groups said the students agreed if there were a drop-in centre they would go. In all four groups, the railroad station was mentioned as a good place if it could be obtained.

Also considered were the Y, arena, or above the police office — (the last bringing titters from the students).

Problems? All groups agreed if there were a drop-in centre, there'd be problems. Perhaps 95 per cent of those attending would be "straight" but the other five per cent would cause the trouble that could ruin the whole program. How this could be resolved was a sticky problem that no one had a good answer to.

In the Mill, in Oakville, drugs or liquor are not allowed. But young people who are "high" or "stoned" are allowed to stay. Keeping their building is always considered the main factor, explained Mrs. Tomlinson. The adults make no moral judgments, she said, but remind the young people their behaviour could lose them their building. It is nominally run by the Salvation Army.

Workers felt problems should be out in the open. Drinkers should be in a drop-in-centre, rather than out in cars, it was suggested.

Surprise to some adults was the unanimous agreement of students that no special program is needed. The Oakville representatives said there is no

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Serve injunction

A stop work injunction will be served on the Golden Horseshoe Dragway today (Wednesday), the Free Press was notified just before going to press.

Toronto solicitor Steven French, working on behalf of residents in the northern part of Esquesing, secured the injunction from Judge Haines, claiming the dragway is contravening the agricultural holding by-law in the township.

Residents in the northern end of the township opposed construction of the dragway and the injunction is another development in a long battle to halt building.

Waste disposal plant?

Esquesing council will wait for advice from newly hired planning consultants before making any decisions on establishment of a proposed centralized waste disposal plant on the former Rognvaldson property on Highway 25, just south of Acton.

At Monday night's regular council meeting, clerk-treasurer Delmar French made a brief report on a recent township planning board meeting. He said the planning board chairman had told Bill Lombard of Trecon Associates council was in the process of engaging a planner and would like to have his advice first.

Mr. French also reported Mr. Lombard told planning board his firm has altered plans for the proposed plant.

Plans now call for the installation of storage tanks instead of lagoons to hold waste liquids.



SEARCHING FOR a suspect following the robbery of a trust company Tuesday, Cons. Roy Wood with rifle at the ready stopped cars in town. The road block lasted from 2.30 p.m. till they were instructed to stop at 5 p.m. by Kitchener detachment when the man was located. A crowd gathered to watch, later dispersed by Cons. Bruce McArthur.—(Staff Photo)

Robbery charge

A Georgetown youth was charged with robbery, following an incident at 1.30 a.m. April 4. An Acton youth, hitchhiking from Rockwood, was picked up by a car containing six youths. He said that under threat of assault he gave one of them his jacket, valued at \$50.

Layoff rumor proves false

Rumors circulating about a substantial layoff at Beardmore and Company have been denied by company president Norman Braida.

On the contrary, Mr. Braida told the Free Press this week the company has started to take back some of the workers laid off earlier in the winter.

Big upswing in business Acton port

Business at the Acton customs port has increased a whopping \$68,873.04 in the year 1969-70, customs officer Murray Harrison told the Free Press this week.

Revenue in the first six months of the year showed \$214,874.17 as opposed to \$186,018.35 in the same period in 1968-69. The second six month period showed a rise from \$191,990.53 to \$222,007.75, reflecting the increased business.

Numbers of entries increased in line with fiscal returns rising from 2,900 in 1968-69 to 3,355 in the 1969-70 period.

Mr. Harrison cites increased business from several Acton industries and increased use of the Acton customs port by industries in Milton for the upswing in business, which he and Vince Montgomery process.



TOP HATS AND canes recalled the Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers movies at the ice revue Saturday. In the number were Debbie Drinkwater, Becky Baxter, Gerda Selz, Cathy Weldon, Dolores Jordan and Kathy Turkosz.—(Staff Photo)



MAUVE SATIN trimmed with fur created captivating costumes for the Dr. Zhivago number. Cosy skaters were Colleen De Bruyn, Susan Schupp, Patti Dunn, Linda Perry, Susan McPhail, Anne Marie Luty, Sharon Barber and Diane Charette.—(Staff Photo)