

# Save farm land Eramosa planners tell Hydro

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## Treat agriculture as you would business

A seven man team from Ontario Hydro was told they should treat agriculture as they would any other business when considering a route for towers through Wellington, County and Eramosa Township in particular.

At a joint meeting of the Eramosa planning board and members of the township council with Hydro, Thursday, John Benham said it was time Hydro rated agricultural land higher on the scale than they have in the past because agriculture is a business just as any other factor which the projected towers from the Bruce generating station are trying to avoid.

"A great many farmers in Eramosa township have invested from a quarter to half a million dollars," Mr. Benham told Hydro representatives Thursday evening. "I think you should respect businesses as business and avoid them as much as possible."

**Sketchy info**

He criticized Hydro for seeking information about the township from Guelph planners instead of coming to the township planning board which has much more detailed information about Eramosa. As a result, he pointed out, Hydro information maps concerning routes to avoid for towers are incomplete, relying only on the sketchy information

taken from the Guelph and suburban planner, who lives in London.

Mr. Benham also pointed out that the official plan for Guelph and the four adjoining townships picked Eramosa Township as an agricultural area and residents wanted to keep it that way. It had been zoned as agriculture and the plan was trying to discourage urban development. People in the urban fringe were moving to Eramosa because they want to stay in an agriculture area.

Some farmers had unwisely sold land on farm frontage for houses and they now realize it devalued the land, Mr. Benham said. It would be the same for hydro lines, he felt.

"Would you want to live close to one of those things?" he asked Hydro representatives.

Mr. Benham's concern for Hydro's rating of Eramosa land was shared by planning board member Dick Strong who questioned the method used to evaluate on the maps hung up around the room at the Rockwood school. Mr. Strong thought hydro should have compiled the data for maps in reverse. He said urban people tended to underestimate the rural value of life.

"Too much value is put on the urban potential for recreation," he thought.

Mr. Strong pointed to maps which showed three air strips which were a major deterrent for avoiding an area

while agricultural land was classed as one big lump where it was permissible to run towers.

Councillor Betty Lou Clark and Mr. Benham pointed out present hydro maps were full of errors because of generalization. Land at Elora is marked in red, presumably because of the experimental farm there, Mr. Benham said, but Hydro was not aware the climate in the area downgrades the value of the land.

By the same token, better farms in Eramosa township were in the path of towers in spite of the fact better land and climate made them more suitable as prime agricultural land.

Hydro officials agreed there were large gaps in their knowledge of the township and asked members of the planning board and council to fill in information they were not aware of such as the Everton scout camp and Camp Brebeuf, both of which were in a proposed hydro corridor.

Eramosa planners and councillors thought it was hardly fair for Hydro to avoid large recreation areas such as the Rockwood Conservation Park and run through private camps such as these.

Councillor Clark added she felt agricultural land was just as sacred as conservation land, and hydro should adjust its thinking accordingly.



These Hydro sentinels march through Burlington.

## Government eyes Speyside crossing

A joint report to the Solandt Commission from five ministries of the Ontario Government and Ontario Hydro suggests Speyside is the point in the Niagara Escarpment that Hydro's proposed 500 KV line should cross with the escarpment.

The five ministries include Agriculture and Food, Environment, Natural Resources, Transportation and Communications, and Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs.

The brief states the government committee or working committee favors two power lines in a single escarpment corridor rather than two separate crossings.

**Prefer over 401**

If the two crossings in a single corridor zone are feasible, the committee favors the Speyside-Limehouse crossing rather than in the Highway 401 zone.

The report also deals with a number of concerns in connection with the Parkway Belt. The report points out the need to make sure the use of the parkway plan is compatible with the terms set out when the belt was announced.

The report indicates the parkway belt must serve a buffer strips on which berms and trees can be located.

In order to minimize the financial losses resulting from delays in incorporating the Bruce Generating Station, priority consideration should be given to the section of Parkway Belt West. That belt extends from Milton to the proposed Halton Terminal number of purposes and if it is used in some places by the lowering hydro lines it could defeat other uses such as recreation and open space.

The report suggests most of the impacts discussed can be alleviated by substantial redesign of the Parkway Belt West to ensure compatibility of the various functions of the belt.

**Reinforce Belt**

The plan calls for early definition of the right of way for the 500 KV lines. This would be important to reinforce the Parkway Belt plan in areas where heavy development is taking place, the report says.

Any redesign of the Parkway Belt to accommodate the 500 KV lines should provide

Station with the aim of providing Hydro with an early approval to acquire this part of right of way for the hydro corridor.

## Meet again to fill in map

Members of Eramosa Planning board agreed they would meet again with council this week to plot a map showing features Hydro towers should avoid when and if they cross the township.

John Benham and John Turner of the board were critical of the way Hydro had

marked information on its maps by relying on the Guelph planners instead of coming to the township planning board and Hydro representatives acknowledged they might have slipped up. A further map was given to the planners so they could mark in Eramosa landmarks hydro should avoid.

Councillor Betty Lou Clark said the only map which had the Eramosa information on it was snapped up by a township farmer at the public meeting in East Garafraxa school recently. (She has since recovered it and will use it for reference at the Tuesday meeting). Hydro apparently never knew the map was gone.

The farmer simply asked if he could have it. Receiving an affirmative he peeled the map off the wall. None of the Hydro officials there were aware it was missing, she said.

## Study of Georgetown

An intensive study of Georgetown is the basis of a thesis by Dr. Alan Powell, professor of sociology at the U of T, which resulted in his obtaining his Ph. D. degree three weeks ago. The research is the result of seven years summer vacation work with the help of over 600 Georgetown citizens.

The study focussed on five issues in Georgetown history, the AVRO Arrow project, impact of developer Rex Heslop, the French-speaking community's demand of education in French, the purchase of Cedarvale and recent participation in local government.

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## Farmers don't trust pros any more - chmn.

People in agriculture just don't trust professionals the way they used to, planning board chairman John Benham told representatives of Ontario Hydro last Thursday at a joint meeting to discuss a possible routing of hydro towers through Eramosa township.

He said Hydro added to the mistrust by going to others instead of the township

planning board when they planned a route through Eramosa. "They would have got a clearer picture of Eramosa here", he said.

Hydro spokesman Dr. Bob Walker said it was not as simple a picture as some people tried to paint as everyone they approached tells them their land is best. "Every meeting we go to we get the same story."

We have the whole study area to take into account, Dr. Walker said, pointing out everyone wants their farm in an area where the towers should avoid.

Art Mosher of Hydro said their attempts to separate agricultural land had drawn nothing but criticism. He acknowledged the mistrust of professionals existed but noted as a boy in Sussex, New Brunswick, his family and others of the area had felt the same way about people who came from St. John's, with its 40,000 people.

Mr. Mosher also said there was no possibility of another study of the area being done by private consultants, pointing out it could lead to a war in the whole area.

"Then this whole evening is a lesson in futility," retorted Councillor Betty Lou Clark, "since you've already decided where the towers are going to go."

Mr. Mosher denied this, but said once a line was put on a map it could greatly upset one set of neighbors against another if it was changed by another study.

At Nevill of the systems branch of Hydro also alleged Eramosa customers Hydro had some obligation to accept the inconvenience of towers since they were also large users of power.

## Warrender chairman

Judge William K. Warrender of Hamilton was named chairman of the Halton Police Commission at an informal meeting Thursday.

The first working meeting of the commission will be held Oct. 15 at 2 p.m. in the Oakville Municipal Building. The appointment of a chief for the Halton Regional Police Force is expected to be one of the high priority decisions the commission will have to

make.

Commission members also include Glenn Magnuson from Georgetown, Mayor Harry Barrett of Oakville, Mayor George Harrington of Burlington and William Hourigan, a Burlington solicitor.

Magnuson said the meeting Thursday was to recognize the steering committee and working committee which include police chiefs.

## Experts will discuss line

A panel of individuals with agricultural expertise will discuss the impact of the proposed 500 KV hydro line on agricultural land in Ontario at a meeting Nov. 23 at 9:30 a.m. in the Ferguson Block of Queens Park.

Harold Middlebrook, a Burlington farmer has been appointed to represent Halton and Peel farmers on the panel. Agriculture Federation president Bruce McClure told the administration committee of County Council he hoped one of their members would attend as an observer.

Middlebrook told the committee he had presented a verbal and slide presentation to the Solandt Commission earlier and felt the agricultural brief had been well received by the committee.

discussion on the hydro line will be that farm groups will take a serious look at land use and permanent zoning for agricultural land. He told the committee he hoped regional councillors would give serious consideration to the ideas presented by the farm groups at a later date.

Esquing Deputy Reeve Len Cox said both Esquing Council and a citizens' committee in the township had thrown their support behind the agriculture federation's brief. Cox described that brief as the best documented and said it recommends the most reasonable route.

Middlebrook said one of the upshots from all of the dis-



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## Hydro says its impact on agriculture minimal

The seven man Hydro team which met with Eramosa planners and councillors Thursday defended use of agricultural land for the 150 foot towers by suggesting the potential effect on productivity was extremely minimal.

Dr. Bob Walker who spoke for Hydro said the impact on agriculture as compared to other forms of business was not as great and this was the rationale behind their thinking.

According to Hydro figures the towers would take two acres of land out of production for every six miles of single tower line. Dr. Walker said it was Hydro's feeling that very little land would be taken out of production by the towers, each tower occupying about 75 square feet of land.

Dr. Walker described Hydro's difficulties in

deciding which way the towers should go, pointing out the area embraced 3,000 miles in which the physical characteristics had to be defined, including prime agricultural land.

John Turner of the planning board said Hydro figures about the towers did not take drop of the lines into effect and this could have an effect on large combines in areas where township farmers had invested in large machines to harvest large fields they had spent considerable time and expense in expanding by removing fence bottoms.

"You've got to think about agriculture as a business," repeated planning chairman John Benham. "You can't move it around as you would a manufacturing business."

But Dr. Walker said the main concern of people Hydro had talked to along the route

was visual, not the effect it would have on agricultural production.

Mr. Benham pointed out that by the Hydro system of values a field with a pile of stones goes down; therefore it would follow that hydro towers would also devalue the land.

Dr. Walker didn't agree. As he saw it the stone pile told the story something about the quality of the land. He agreed the towers probably did devalue the land some and that Hydro was now doing a study to determine how much.

Sandy McDermid of Hydro said farmers did not admit that the towers would not be destroying but disrupting the farm operation and he felt there was no rational for them to stay off agricultural land instead of other land.

Mr. Benham said Hydro had failed to distinguish between prime agricultural land and agricultural land, and this was what was bothering them.

Allen Vaughan of Hydro, concerned with the visual impact of the lines, told the joint meeting he was a proponent of the utility corridor to carry towers but felt there was also a visual risk there in certain parts of the province where land was flat. He outlined the problems his department faces and how they tried to avoid areas where the towers would stick out like sore thumbs. Mr. Vaughan acknowledged there would always be areas where the presence of the towers would jar people but asked the meeting what was most important—visual impact or power?

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