

Recommend widen Mill sidewalks, cut parking

Halton Hills works committee decided Monday to widen sidewalks on Mill Street and ban parking on the south side of the street once the reconstruction job is completed this year.

During a long discussion the committee looked at a number of options for reconstruction of the street but settled on the one which will mean a loss of more parking spots for customers shopping in downtown Acton.

The committee decided to ban parking because it will "make merchants meet the problems head on. If we don't ban parking on the south side the merchants will never get together and develop off street parking," Councillor Ern Hyde said.

Hyde and Councillor Dick Howitt shared the same view that removing the parking on the south side of Mill Street would give the merchants the necessary incentive to get together and develop some off street parking.

Favor

They observed the downtown merchants were lucky they aren't competing with any plazas and suggested by forcing the merchants to get together after about 50 years of fighting about parking facilities they were really doing them a favor.

It was suggested many businessmen wanted the town to give them direction. Both councillors Joe Hurst and Mike Armstrong wanted to hold a meeting between the

committee and downtown merchants to find out exactly what they wanted done with the street.

Hyde and Howitt opposed this idea because the merchants haven't been able to come to a consensus yet and they aren't likely to at another meeting.

The committee considered reconstructing Mill Street and leaving it just the way it is with no changes in parking or sidewalk width but the idea was rejected.

"It will cost bucks from all over Halton Hills for this project and I think it would be wrong to simply reconstruct the street the way it is now. I hate to go against the wishes of the Acton representatives but something has to be done

about the street," Hyde declared.

Engineer Robert Austin said the project will cost \$200,000 and come out of both Halton Hills and Queen's Park coffers.

Hyde said the same problem existed in Georgetown when one side of Main Street had angle parking and the change to parallel parking got merchants moving on off street parking.

Hurst observed there is a big difference between Main Street Georgetown and Mill Street Acton since Mill Street is a highway with through traffic. He admitted Queen's Park would be happy with a south side parking ban.

Hurst said he wasn't entirely against the idea but stressed

the importance of consulting more with the merchants.

He said many of Acton's traffic congestion problems could be solved when a by-pass eventually materializes and admitted while the sidewalk on the north side of Mill Street was a little narrow there wouldn't be as much of a problem if merchandise was kept off the walk.

Austin said in discussions with merchants one day they want wider sidewalks and the next day they don't. He said if the street was reconstructed as is parking could be banned in the future.

Hurst observed if parking was banned after reconstruction it would be hard to ever bring it back.

Austin said the town planners

want wider sidewalks and have suggested interlocking cobblestones instead of concrete in the Main to John Street area. He added if they are installed properly they don't cost any more to maintain and add character to the sidewalks.

He noted if parking was banned on one side the driving lanes would be wider even with the sidewalks being enlarged.

"It is a poor street to drive down and for the sake of the merchants we should be looking at improving it and not just leaving it the way it is," Hyde said.

He and Howitt agreed the town couldn't wait until the merchants come to a consensus about what they want

and the development of off street parking because both could be a long time coming.

The committee received letters about parking from Councillors Les Duby and Pat McKenzie at the meeting along with a letter posted in Acton signed by a "concerned merchant."

On Hyde's recommendation the committee decided to ignore the last letter until the writer came forward and identified himself.

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Copies of their letters have been given to the Free Press by councillors Duby and McKenzie on request. The letters were not discussed at the meeting.

These letters follow.

G. W. McKenzie letter

"Gentlemen:

"May I congratulate you and your committee for giving the re-development of Mill Street in Ward 1 an excellent rating for 1976 and may I take this opportunity to mention that I have a concern in this re-development and ask your committee for further consideration.

"Although the final recommendation has not come to council the comments at our last Planning Committee meeting led me to believe that your committee has reached a decision on parking on the South side of Mill Street.

"I'm sure that you are all aware that there is a very serious parking problem in

the downtown area of Ward 1 at the present time. The merchants are presently planning to alleviate this problem by providing "off-street" parking but their assessment is such that they cannot cope with the problem if COUNCIL bans parking on the South Side of Mill Street from Main Street to Fellows.

"If we ban parking on one side of Mill Street we are solving a problem on No. 7 Highway for the Province of Ontario at the expense of merchants and residents of Ward 1. This concern has already been mentioned to you by the merchants and the Chamber of Commerce.

Therefore, I ask that committee re-open this very serious

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Twenty-Six Pages - Fifteen Cents

\$4,000 grant from region for Community Services Centre

After lengthy debate Halton Hills Mayor Tom Hill and Councillor Fat McKenzie were finally able to pry \$4,000 out of Halton Region Administration Committee for Acton's new Community Services Centre. They had been looking for a grant of \$6,000.

Burlington Mayor George Harrington led off the discussion endorsing the idea of having all the various social service agencies under one roof but objected to the hiring of a co-ordinator for the centre. Harrington charged all to often projects like this end up being a job making process for somebody.

Committee chairman David Coons noted there isn't a social planning council in North Halton. He said the new centre would bring all the services together for the residents.

McKenzie informed the councillors the person to be hired wasn't really a co-ordinator but in fact was a receptionist. He said the receptionist wouldn't be a highly paid social services professional and would come from the Acton area.

The Acton regional representative said the centre would have two rooms rent free at the Acton 'Y' building so money was needed to cover the receptionist's wages and other expenses.

McKenzie noted Halton Hills will give a grant of \$3,000 and Queen's Park has promised to fork over some money if the region does.

Hill pointed out the receptionist was needed to handle referrals of residents to the various agencies.

Harrington complained that in Burlington and Oakville such projects are supported entirely by the local municipality and maintained

it was solely Halton Hill's job to finance the centre. He added individuals and groups in the Acton area should be approached for financial assistance.

McKenzie stated while there are social and family services offices in the south there isn't anything like this in the north. He said the project is just getting off the ground and if it didn't click

after a year it would be dropped. McKenzie added there will be local fund raising carried out.

Hill noted the centre is being started to see if it is worthwhile and promised the committee it wouldn't see it back on next year's grant request agenda.

Both Hill and McKenzie pointed out Acton residents have to leave the town to con-

tact social service agencies. The mayor said there is family counselling in Georgetown but only half a day each week.

Coons noted social and family services wasn't the only component of the new centre because there were many other groups participating.

The centre has the endorsement of the police department, Halton Board of Edu-

cation, Board of Health and the region's social and family services department, McKenzie said.

Hill stated the new centre was both a regional and area municipality responsibility.

Councillor Carl Eriksen said grants are a sensitive issue and the policy is grants are only awarded to groups which serve all of Halton. He

(Continued on page 2)

Two Acton area residents struck it rich last month thanks to the Olympic lottery and the Wintario lottery draws.

V. J. Flaherty, R.R. 2, Acton, held the winning ticket for \$10,000, the Ontario Lottery Corporation announced last week. The draw was held in Stratford on January 22.

On January 25, Doug Dawkins of Frederick St. N. was the lucky winner of \$1,000 in the Olympic lottery draw on a ticket bought by his granddaughter Colleen Spielvogel at the Bank of Montreal.

Mr. Dawkins told the Free Press the four numbers he had corresponded with the last four on one of the million dollar prizes.

The money, Mr. Dawkins said, automatically went into the bank.

This was not the first time he had won money in that lottery, he explained. One other time he won \$100.



CUTTING OF a wide red ribbon marked the official opening of the new addition to the scout hall Saturday evening. Beaming faces belong to Grant Schultz, president of the Rotary club which sponsors the Scout-Guide movement; Barbara Murchison, president of the Scout and Guide Mothers Association; Don McDonald, chairman of the Scout Group Committee, and assistant scoutmaster Mark Rowe. Rotarians and Scout and Guide Mothers made major financial contributions.

GO is on the go now serves town

GO Transit buses can be flagged down anywhere along Highway Seven in Acton, according to GO spokesman Tom Henry.

The service came into effect on February 15, replacing the Grey Coach lines. Mr. Henry explained that the only difference between GO's service and the Grey Coach is the lower fares with GO and the different colors.

Signs have been posted throughout the town designating where the buses will stop, but the spokesman said they can come to a halt anywhere. He pointed out that they have no agency (Watson's Restaurant was the Grey Coach agency) but are striving to find a place.

The buses leave Guelph and continue along Highway Seven to Brampton, where they go south on Highway ten to Cooksville. Here the buses turn east on highway five and south on Bay St. to the Bay and Dundas bus terminal. The trip takes about an hour and 45 minutes, Mr. Henry calculated.

Eight buses go through Acton on weekdays and the same number on weekends. An extra bus connects with the Georgetown GO train once a day also.

As of yet, it is not known how many passengers from Acton take advantage of the GO bus, Mr. Henry said.

Since there is no depot here yet, parcels sent by bus are dropped off in Georgetown.



SIGN OF THE times. GO transit sign by tracks on Mill St. is a constant reminder that the company has taken over the Grey Coach bus route. Embarking passengers better hurry, though. Buses parked there picking up riders will be in a no parking zone.

Acton winners

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P.A. system at Acton pool

A public address system costing \$695 will be installed in the swimming pool area at Acton High School, if Halton Hills council agrees with administration committee.

Facility Superintendent Pat Sheehan said it is a safety measure.

The committee said they would try to collect the cost from Halton Board of Educa-

tion.

Councillor Iroy Booth said he could not understand why the town should be paying for the system anyway.

Mr. Sheehan said the town signed the contract, so are responsible to see the public address system is built. He pointed out the Halton Board of Education is willing to pay the cost.

Library losses

Down in Georgetown on the rise in Acton

Since lay-out changes were made last year at Georgetown High School library, book loss has decreased. At the same time the rate of loss at Acton High School has gone up dramatically.

A report on loss of books and other items in Halton high schools was presented Thursday to the Halton Board of Education.

The report said the changes

at Georgetown High School have "provided more direct control in the resource centres."

The increasing loss rate at Acton High School was blamed on a noticeable increase in the use of the library by pupils and the lack of a full time librarian. It was noted in the report there will be a teacher in the library full time this year.

Ban St. Alban's parking on south

Halton Hills works committee decided Monday to change the parking ban on St. Alban's drive from the south side to the north side as an accommodation to L and L Ford service customers who park on the south side.

The parking ban had been discussed for many months and recently the committee finally decided to ban parking on the south side of the road.

Council had given two readings of the by-law when the car dealership complained the parking ban would effect its business and the committee decided to take another look at the situation.

The committee agreed

parking should be banned on one side of the street and the north side ban would prove to be the least inconvenient to L and L customers and area residents.

Newest life member is Morgan Madill

Morgan Madill has been named a life member of Acton Agricultural Society.

He joins R. L. Davidson, Cliff S. Grey, Stan Matthews and Mel McCullough in this elite group.

The decision was made at the last general meeting of the Society.

Mr. Madill lives at R.R. 1, Limehouse. He has been active in the Society for many years.

Skatathon on March 14

Another Skatathon is being planned for the arena on Sunday, March 14, and pledge sheets are going out to Robert Little, M.Z., Bennett, Speyside, Ospringe and Limehouse schools this week.

Last year's Skatathon was a huge success with almost \$6,000 raised in one afternoon. The money was split-half to the Rotary, and half to the participating schools. The Rotary, which sponsored the event, subsequently made a hefty donation for the scout hall addition. Schools used some of the proceeds to finance their annual school trips. Robert Little students went to Ottawa, MZBs to Quebec.

Some high school students also donated the blades last year to garner pledge money.

One top skater brought in \$714 last year.

Behind schedule in budget drafting

The 1976 budget will be ready for the Finance and Personnel committee to review on March 5, only one week behind schedule, according to Halton Hills' treasurer Raymond King.

Mr. King told the committee Monday evening that the February 27 deadline could not be met, but he said the budget would be available for the March 8 meeting of the committee.

The town had instructed department heads to keep their budget increases down to ten per cent over last year. This, according to Mr. King, is a combination of the government's and the area municipality's attempt to restrict expenditures.

Mr. King explained that the total general budget is a gearing exercise and once the Halton Board of Education and the Halton Regions budgets came through, the treasurer can adjust accordingly.

Councillor Ernie Sykes said it would be interesting to note the region's budget as they are also going through and austerity program and he hopes it will reflect the Halton Hills levy.



LENO AND LYDIA Braida were guests of honor at a party at Building Products plant Friday. Dr. Braida has been transferred to Montreal, and BP Associates said farewell with gifts. Story inside.

Six mill hike in region budget \$45 tax increase for Halton Hills

If Halton Regional Council approves the proposed 1976 operating budget the average Halton Hills ratepayers will fork over an extra \$45 in taxes this year and it will cost the average Milton taxpayer \$30.

In his report to council, Chief Administrative Officer Ernie Reid predicted unless cuts are made tax bills will go up 37.5 per cent or six mills.

The proposed operating budget is \$27,901,353, of which \$13,910,836 would have to be raised through local taxes the rest coming from sources such as provincial grants. Last fall the region had predicted a budget for this year of \$24,590,143 taking inflation into account. The proposed budget is \$3,308,210 over the October prediction.

If the mill rate isn't increased the region could raise only \$10,177,000 of the over \$13 million required to cover this year's budget since assessment gone up only 4.5 per cent.

Treasurer Don Farmer noted in his report the proposed budget shows a "very substantial increase" and predicted it probably is "unacceptable."

He noted all regional governments face huge budget increases because of drastically decreased provincial grants.

Most departments are well within the inflation increase level for their budgets, but \$3.5 million in road and sewer work planned this year has played a significant role in the \$3.3 million increase over the 10

per cent inflation allotment. The treasurer says the \$3.5 million road and sewer work budget should be reduced.

Other factors in the over \$3 million increase over the projection for this year's budget allowing for inflation are requests for more staff and furniture, higher road maintenance costs, an \$11,000 councillors' pension plan, increased grants to local agencies and additional money for Halton Human Services Council.

Farmer says every reasonable effort should be made to reduce the six mill increase.

Taxes in Halton Hills will jump \$135 if both the proposed Halton Board of Education and regional budgets are approved.

Milton ratepayers would face a \$90 tax hike if both education and region budget proposals are passed. Milton taxes are based on an average assessment of \$5,000 and the average assessment in Halton Hills is \$7,500. The education mill rate is expected to go up 12 mills.

More tax increases will likely be tacked on when Halton Hills and Milton bring down their own budgets. Inflation and reduced provincial grants will certainly force local taxes up even if there is no increase in the level of services.

The proposed regional budget will go to administration committee next month.

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