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## No to town hall restoration . . . .

(Continued from page 1)

dissenters. Acton does get its fair share of maintenance services like roads and water-sewer works, but in other areas the community was lacking and it was time for Georgetown and Esquesing councillors to come to the aid of ward one, Tyler declared. By saving the town hall councillors could be leaders in the drive to revitalize downtown.

The councillors who had always been opposed to the town hall shouldn't feel guilty about changing their position, all they'd have to do was eat a little crow which would be easy since "fowl is in season

· Soffits & Fascis · Just as it was 100 years ago when it was built, the hall is a controversial issue today and it was a good Eavestroughing deal to build it then and it's a good deal to save it Aluminum doors &

community.

Acton wants to be part of Halton Hills and was asking for its aboriginal rights, Tyler said, urging councillors hear the voices and feel the pulse of the

Council shouldn't allow the hall to create a Mason-Dixon line through Halton Hills on the Escarpment, Tyler said. He asked council help Acton maintain its identity and get a pearl instead of a pea in the deal. Betty Oakes questloned how the hall's maintenance and upkeep would be financed while Nan Hurst suggested nobody has nalled down exactly

during the council debate. Grubbe and Knechtel moved and seconded the mayor's notice of motion of two weeks ago which

what will be done with the hall once it's restored.

Pomeroy said both questions would be answered

stated: "Whereas the former Town of Acton Town Hall

was constructed in 1882-B3; "And whereas in 1974 the former Town of Acton became a part of the Town of Halton Hills and the former Town Hall became surplus for municipal administrative offices;

"And whereas in 1977! the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Halton Hills received a petition to have the former Town of Acton Town Hall saved; and "Whereas the Town of Halton Hills in 1977

designated the building as a historical site by Bylaw 77-94; and "Whereas the community have continued to express their support for the possible restoration of the building by various fund raising activities; and

"Whereas the Town of Halton Hills have received confirmation of "Eligibility for Winterio Capital Grant Program", and which confirmation has been extended by the Ministry of Culture and Recreation to facilitate the undertaking of a feasibility study which has not been completed, and;

"Whereas the feasibility study and B.I.A. Study have identified the need, the historical significance, the costs, based on alternative scenarios;

"Now, therefore, the council of the Corporation of the Town of Halton Hills enacts as follows: "That the Council indicate their endorsement of

the retention and restoration of the former Town of Acton Town Hall; "That the aforesaid commitment to this project be on the basis that the municipality is eligible to receive Wintario, Heritage and Community

Recreation Centres grants from the Province of Ontario; "That the municipality make application to the various agencies for confirmation of all eligible grants prior to proceeding with the project once

firm tendered costs for the works are received; "That Scenario number 4 at an estimated cost of \$440,000.00, plus fees, plus furniture, finishes and equipment as outlined in the Feasibility Study dated December, 1981, by Kleinfeldt Consultants Ltd. be

the approved scenario; "That the municipal portion of the funding for the project be included in the 1982 Capital Budget for consideration."



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Deciding the fate of the town hall had been many years coming, Grubbe observed, longer than she

has lived in the town. The consultant's report said the building was structurally sound and a significant example of the architecture of Acton as well as being the focus of the community's unique social and political development. Besides being an important link to the past, the town hall was an anchor building crucial to downtown revitalization and Acton's development as a tourist centre. The hall would be a

presence in ward one, she maintained. Halton Hills must "preserve and respect" the identity of all the areas which went together to

make up the amalgamated municipality. Delving into the history of the hall Maltby said he had supported the idea of the community raising the funds to save the hall and couldn't back down from that pledge. The fund raising has stalled several times, he observed, and council came to the rescue by extending deadlines, backing the project with funds set aside for demolition and designating the hall a heritage building.

Malthy said he'd like to see the town hall saved, but couldn't go back on his stand that it shouldn't be done with tax dollars. It might be a different situation if the community was raising more than the \$80,000 required as matching funds for Wintario and the project wasn't going to cost \$250,000 or more in tax dollars.

It was true the municipality put tax dollars into the library-cultural centre project in Georgetown but tax dollars also went into the indoor pool in Acton so it couldn't be said the municipality hasn't

helped ward one. Halton Hills is in a strong financial position because it pays bills as it goes along and is careful. he said. Malthy suggested he could support the town hall if the community had raised \$200,000 and not just over \$40,000. Halton Hills was "being had" because the town hall just wasn't needed as a

community centre. Moving the town and region offices to the hall would save Halton Hills and the region over \$7,000 a year in rents which will be even higher next year, Councillor Ross Knechtel said.

He called the town hall a 100-year-old symbol of Acton and while he wanted to see it torn down when he first moved here he now saw the merits of saving the building. Town hall backers have struggled to raise funds

with no commitment and if council backed the hall it would be much easier to gather donations. Malthy should have used the same standards of community fund raising efforts for the cultural centre as he was expecting for the town hall, Knechtel said. It is the third building Acton has tried to save

after failing with the post office and rallway station, Knechtel said, to objections of inaccuracy from some in the audience. As Acton grows in the years ahead municipal offices will be needed even more Knechtel

predicted, and it will cost the town less to save the hall than build a new facility. Over 4,000 tourists are coming to Acton and with Jack Tanner's Table more are on their way, including bus tours, and restoration of the town hall centre in Acton.

with help the growing tourist business. The town hall will have a spin-off for downtown revitalization which will improve commercial assessment and bring more dollars into the town treasury. Good planning and financial management reasons support restoration because it will preserve an historical building, encourage redevelopment downtown, increase commercial assessment and give the municipality offices, all at a bargain price.

Booth surprised many by backing the town hall after long opposing the project. The cultural centre will always be the Georgetown library and hamlets have community centres so Acton should have one too, he said. Each area of Halton Hills is different and each should have a focus for maintaining its

identity. He said the mayor's backing of the hall had swayed his vote, because with Pomeroy working for the town hall it meant the project would be a suc-

Councillors shouldn't be "bigots" and stick to old stands and commitments they made before all the facts about the town hall were known.

community than the town hall will be, Miller predicted, and moving the police station to the town hall would be a mistake because it would take the regional force off the main street. Meeting rooms aren't needed in Acton and there are places for the seniors to meet. Backing the town hall would put saving the Stone School on thin ice because the municipality couldn't

moving of the fire hall, something which can't be afforded, Miller said. The hall would also create new parking problems in the downtown area. Saving the town hall for heritage reasons had some merit, Serjeantson said, but it would create tremendous budget problems in a year when running the finances of the town will be very difficult. The only way to handle the project would be to take

funds out of reserves set aside for a municipal complex, she warned. There were too many questions still not answered on town hall funding and an example of restraint must be set at the Halton Hills level because it isn't happening at the region, Queen's Park or in Ottawa. Also need for the town hall hadn't been

established strongly enough. Whiting countered the municipal complex and Stone School worries were red herrings since they would be financed by different methods. If Acton is to grow, a new fire hall, more centrally located, will he needed anyway he added. The BIA study shows there will be parking in the

downtown so that was no problem. Whiting said,

and council couldn't wait another year to save the town hall when financing might be easier because the project won't be there. If restraint was needed now why wasn't it needed with the library-cultural centre, he wondered. The region wants to expand its services in Acton but can't without offices so the hall would give not just Halton Hills a presence in Acton but also the region. Hall maintenance will be less than renting

fices was desirable in Acton, the same as it is in Georgelown. He predicted the building will cost less than \$400,000 to restore but the only way to get all the an- average annual re- residents an average

municipal quarters and consolidation of town of-

swers was to call tenders. Need for the hall hadn't been established, making grants questionable, Levy said, adding the new Salvation Army building planned in Acton will add more meeting space to the community. He branded the hall a "pink elephant" and a project pushed by just a handful of people who only wanted to save the outside of the building at the start of their cam-

The location isn't suitable for things like the Acton Social Services and Information Centre and many potential users won't be able to pay much in rent. The fire hall and needed changes to the building will mean compromise on the integrity of the hall

appearance and will mean council is creating a monument, Levy sald. The 1977 petition contained names of school children and non-residents and was taken over a

people of "significant standing" in the community. To save the building to preserve Acton's identity would go against the whole idea behind Halton Hills and Levy painted a gloomy economic picture for not

just the town but the entire nation to back up his claim the hall wasn't affordable. There were many 'ifa' surrounding restoration costs and cost to the taxpayers and he suggested the

final cost would be about \$600,000 or \$84 a square foot. The hall would add between \$16 and \$23 to the average tax bill for just one project, Levy warned. Depite hard work and strong efforts the fund focal point for Acton and give the municipality a

raising for the hall hasn't gone well, showing a weak interest in Acton in the project. He asked how Acton councillors could back

Section 86 to make the tax system fairer and then turn around and want to "aggrevate" the financial situation by adding the town hall to the long list of projects the municipality must fund this year. Budget cuts would be needed to pay for the hall and Levy asked if council wanted to put ActiVan,

pumper for Acton, in jeoprody. "Is it any wonder that I am displaying such concern?" he said after reviewing the town's financial position. He said if the town hall was saved he couldn't continue the tough job as budget committee chair-

downtown revitalization, road work and a new fire

Biehn said the consultant's report shows there is no need for the town hall and while he appreciated sentiment for the hall he couldn't back a project which isn't needed. The hall has never been a "thing

of beauty" and wasn't "physically worth saving." Acton's identity is its people and not tied to the town hall Sheldon suggested, and need wasn't established in the study. Money should be spent on downtown revitalization not the town hall, she said, noting tourism won't focus on the town hall either.

She said she shared Levy's concerns about town finances and there were too many 'ifs' surrounding restoration costs and grants. It's a "funding nightmare". She couldn't support an unnecessary prolect when roads are needed in Esquesing and the town shouldn't go out and spend thousands just to get grants.

Halton Hills should take advantage of grants, McDonald said, and the town hall was the first time Acton has put its "act together" and supported a project since regional government. Council didn't need to decide now to go for either

total restoration or tear the building down. It would be wrong to tear the building down now because remedial work could be done on the exterior with existing funds. Pomeroy said he didn't become a town hall backer without first studying the plan carefully and

suggested facts and figures were twisted by some members of council. Total restoration cost will be closer to \$500,000 than \$600,000, the mayor said, and council could be flexible in working out the financing just as it was

with the \$1.7 million cultural centre. Both the BIA and hall studies "lean towards restoration" and the hall will give the town a presence in ward one at less cost than a new building. The study also said there is a need for a community resource and government information Wintario and other grants are committed and will

town expected then the project could be killed then. Halton Hills would never know how much it could get in grants if it didn't commit to the project and calls for tenders or architect's estimates. There was no question in the mayor's mind the town hall will help the tourism movement in Acton

go to another town if the hall isn't saved by the

municipality. If the grants weren't as high as the

and there would be spin-off benefits for the community and municipality from the hall. The identity aspect to the town hall was legitimate and it is important the community's identity is preserved, Pomeroy said.

The public must raise \$83,666 and Pomeroy said the project could be killed if the money wasn't raised, though he was sure a commitment would bring the almost \$40,000 additional funds needed. The project will cost about \$225,000 in tax dollars and he promised to work hard to bring it in on budget, about \$56 a square foot. Reserves will never build a municipal complex and that facility won't be

built until there is either a lot more growth or the project is debentured. He felt the reserves would be well spent on the hall. A new building would be put to better use by the After the vote, a move to have the staff look at price, restrictions and methods of selling the hall

was discussed. Booth said nothing should be done with the hall until next year to allow time for the "dust to settle." Council shouldn't vote not to have the building and then turn around and sell it to a community group, Armstrong sald. Such a move would be a "slap in do both. Saving of the town hall would also force the face" to Acton. He said council was just "pro-

longing the agony." Whiting asked the matter be shelved for a while to

give Acton groups time to put together proposals. Clerk-administrator Ken Richardson said the town can rent or sell the building and Pomeroy added the municipality can't give a community group the \$40,000 set aside for demolition.

the community considers its options and staff examines how the building could be sold. Restoration chairman George Elliott said if the hall isn't saved then donations will be returned with

Levy agreed the matter should be deferred while

Leathertown's Chip Petrillo said without the town's \$40,000 and if the building is sold at market value it will be tough for groups to save it. Ted Tyler concluded all interested groups will have to get together and consider the options. Actarlo will continue for the rest of this year and if

there isn't a town hall to fund, the money will be

## Halton ranked third in rates

used for other community projects.

Halton Region's 1981 Norfolk, who charged its sidential water and \$230 per year. Durham sewer bills ranked third was second-highest with highest among area re- \$177. The lowest rates gions according to a were charged by report issued Wednes- Hamilton-Wentworth

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the list was Haldimand- rates.

The report also said Halton placed third highest for large com-According to the mercial/industrial report, the average an- rates, second highest for nual cost to a Halton small commercial/indhousehold who used ustrial and fourth 55,000 gallons last year highest for mid-sized was \$151. At the top of commercial/industrial

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