

The Acton Free Press

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Business and Editorial Office

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Hold by-election

Should a by-election be held or a member of the present council appointed to fill the impending vacancy in the mayor's office? That's the question councillors are wrestling with these days.

Councillors don't have that long to contemplate their decision and citizens don't have much time to let councillors know their preference.

We can appreciate councillors' reluctance to spend \$40,000 or more to hold one, possibly two, by-elections to solve this problem. We also understand their desire not to disrupt and delay the pressing work of council over the next few months with a by-election.

At the same time the roughly two years remaining in this council's term and therefore the time an appointed mayor would serve, is about the same as the time councils formerly were in office, before the province decided to tack a third year onto the term, starting with last year's election. Also Halton Hills councils have generally filled vacancies through by-elections, except when there has only been a short time left in a council term.

Undoubtedly there will be taxpayers who will complain if there's a winter by-election, there's a chance the voter turnout wouldn't

be as strong as it should be considering the important position which is being filled. It is just as certain there will be taxpayers who will be greatly annoyed if councillors decide to deny them the right to vote for who will head their municipality the rest of this term.

Most of the comments from voters this newspaper's staff has been hearing in the past week have favored a by-election. People seem to feel the estimated cost of a by-election is a small price to pay to allow the democratic process to take place, after all, they note, it's their money and it only amounts to about \$1.50 per head in Halton Hills.

Voters elected Peter Pomeroy to serve as mayor and while we don't think he should be faulted for grabbing the opportunity to advance his career and serve the public in a higher position, we don't feel the taxpayers should be penalized and denied the democratic right to name his replacement.

It's the people's council and they should always have the right to decide who will head that council or serve as a councillor, whenever feasible.

We strongly urge councillors permit the voters to decide who will be Halton Hills' third mayor.—G.M.

From the editor's desk

Goodbye Pete

by Gord Murray
Free Press Editor

You'd think from the headline that Peter Pomeroy was leaving politics instead of simply moving up a notch to regional chairman.

Well, ever since I watched him win the big job at the green monster last Wednesday afternoon I've thought of him as gone, though I know I'll see him from time to time out on the job the next few years and I expect I'll type his name many, many more times before one or both of us retires.

But, after you've seen someone for a few hours at least once a week for seven years (Pete's been mayor for five years, and also sat as a councillor for two years), talked to that person I figure an average of three times a week over the same time period; run into them at countless community events; and then they won't be around nearly so much, you can't help but think of them as gone.

I was pleased to see him win the promotion.

I think he'll do a lot for Halton region. For one thing I suspect he'll solve our long running garbage dilemma, as well as make the region run smoother and more efficiently. He should also be able to push through growth for Acton with Queen's Park in his new, more powerful post.

In the long run I suspect he'll do a lot to improve the region's image up here. Part of the hatred for the region in Acton has been the result of the system and what the councillors have done with it in the past 10 years. But at least part of the bad feelings between the region and Acton has been the result of its bigness and remoteness.

Pomeroy, with his ready smile and personable ways, should make people in the north trust the big machine and the green monster appear a little less distrustful, a little more human.

Peter will give the regional government a familiar, friendly face.

If this sounds a bit like a testimonial, well I guess it is.

This may surprise some people, the way I've snipped at the mayor in columns and editorials over the municipal complex and a few other issues.

I may not have agreed with him on everything, but I still think he was a good mayor and good for Acton.

For someone coming from the east side of Halton Hills he's always had a sympathetic ear for Acton's concerns. In fact, unlike many from his neck of the woods, he had a surprisingly clear understanding of what this little town and its people are all about and

why we've rocked the boat so much. Maybe that was his Norval roots showing.

Lately, as the war of words has heated up, some readers have noticed, and mentioned to me that they've noticed, the mayor taking uncomplimentary broadsides at the press and myself in particular at council meetings and public gatherings. A number have noted they were surprised by his comments, a couple were even more surprised when we printed them.

That kind of stuff doesn't bother a reporter a bit, or at least it shouldn't. Heck, politicians have got to get their licks in too you know.

And, one thing you knew for sure with Pete was that no matter how annoyed he might be with you and your stance on one issue, he wouldn't hold a grudge or let it effect his relationship with a scribe on that issue or any other. That's a somewhat rare human trait considering what is at stake for someone in politics.

Also, with Pomeroy you were sure in your heart that he held his convictions just as sincerely as you did, it was all a difference of opinion. I don't even think Peter thought a difference in opinion was all that bad a situation anyway. It certainly wasn't anything personal between us.

After his victory we chatted briefly and joked a bit about not being able to carry on our fight over the complex issue further, it might have been fun.

I'm glad to see him go. I think a big battle over the complex issue, which seems to be brewing away among taxpayers, would have left him at the centre of controversy. I really feared, even before he decided to seek the chairman's post, that if he became the focal point of the controversy there was a danger that it would produce such a blemish on his career in public life that it would wind up overshadowing all the good things he's done for Halton Hills and Acton over the years. That would have been regrettable. On balance his record as mayor warrants his having a bright spot in Halton Hills history and the hearts of all citizens.

If you're reading this Pete (he's always saying he doesn't read the local papers, a little white lie I suspect since he always seems to know what the editorials say so he can tell us we're out in left field) be sure and drop around. I'll miss you, especially our occasional bull sessions about politics among other topics. Oh, and I almost forgot, good luck.



Letters

Future hinges on complex

Dear Sirs:
Congratulations to Finn Poustrup for his letter setting out the facts and reasons for the action taken by the Town of Halton Hills Council in the matter of purchasing the lands associated with the Stevens Estate.

Congratulations also to Mayor Pomeroy and members of Council for the fine job of bringing the first stage of the proposed Municipal Centre in fruition. The Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital's position in this matter is clear—the project is supported completely for the reasons stated publicly by Judge Kenneth Langdon, Chairman of the Board of the hospital, and myself.

What is perhaps not well understood about the Hospital's position is that:

1) Now that the Town of Halton Hills has an official plan—the hospital has been able to complete its long term planning. The Hospital's long term plan accommodates the anticipated needs in providing a continuum of health care for the community over the next 25 years.

2) Over one million dollars has been committed to provide adequate water mains, sewers, roads, electricity, emergency power and a heliport to properly serve the Hospital's expansion.

3) The planning is for the whole Community of Halton Hills not just Georgetown.

4) Surplus hospital land has been identified and established through this planning process. The purpose of developing the surplus land is specifically to offset the costs of the more than \$5-million required and committed to the building of the Nursing Home. The need for a facility to care for the elderly citizens of this Community has been firmly established and indeed is long overdue.

5) No capital funds are being provided by Government to build the Nursing Home nor for the improvements to the Hospital site in order to accommodate the new building.

How is it going to be paid for? Mortgage financing has to be arranged and amortized as a long-term debt. Nursing Home Care is an insured program under the Province's Health Insurance Plan—therefore, by having obtained an authorized licence to provide a specific number of beds—a per diem cost per patient will be paid to the Nursing Home on behalf of each patient occupying a bed. Out of this revenue, wages, overhead, and debt servicing will be paid.

However, forty-seven (47) licensed Nursing Home beds will not provide adequate revenue to support the cost. An additional thirty (30) self-care units are being built at the same time. The self-care accommodation is not supported in any way by the Province's Health Insurance Plan. Therefore, individuals occupying self-care accommodation will have to support the full per diem cost assessed.

By combining Nursing Home and self-care the Nursing Home is only marginally viable. Hence, the need to offset capital costs whenever possible to reduce the long-term debt-carrying costs.

By identification of surplus land two things can be accomplished: a) offset the capital costs to some extent by the sale of these surplus

lands, and b) ensure a second access road to the enlarged hospital complex, through support of the Town's development plan.

One of the most persuasive arguments influencing the Hospital Board's decision to proceed with the Nursing Home was the forced separation of the elderly from home, friends and family as is the case when a person from this community has to seek Nursing Home Care at outside locations.

I feel that the public debate in this matter is so negative that it is becoming destructive and divisive—so let's "put the cards on the table and have some "plain talk."

Both the Town and the Hospital are two of the largest employers in this community.

From the Hospital's point of view, we employ a good many people from Acton, and will probably employ more when the Nursing Home opens. Approximately sixty (60) new jobs are being created. (I'm sure that Town employees are pretty well distributed throughout Halton Hills.)

The Hospital deplors the negative comments and debate that goes on concerning the interests of Acton and Georgetown. It is evident that Council members do so as well. The Hospital views it as a non-issue. I was particularly impressed with Ross Knechtel's views and comments about the need to bring the Community together.

With respect to the businessmen and women of the Community—surely the ramifications of job creation, and some well planned expansion is not lost on you! Does it much matter where the planned expansion begins? Surely the predominant rationale should be the best interests of the community.

With regard to those citizens signing petitions—perhaps the following items should be considered:

An outside consultant's report clearly establishes that Town employees do not have an appropriate environment in which to work. Secondly, the reorganization of the Town's activities would yield efficient and therefore lower cost administration.

Thirdly, as explained above, the development is critical to the Hospital's expansion and to the provision of services to our elderly citizens.

It would also appear obvious from the examination of all the facts that the development is necessary for the efficient function of

the town. It would appear that the approach being taken by Council is the most efficient way that future development can be accomplished.

From a personal viewpoint having been the Administrator of the Georgetown Hospital for the past ten years I have had the opportunity and pride to observe the tremendous amount of work contributed to the Community by elected officials and responsible citizens of this Town of Halton Hills. I can also tell you as taxpayers—if you had to pay for it in dollars—you couldn't afford it.

Let's look at a few of the organizations and groups making these contributions:

- Volunteer Firefighting Services
- Volunteer Ambulance Services
- Red Cross Blood Donor Services and other activities
- Hospital Volunteers
- The Service Clubs
- The Activan Service
- Hospital, Library and School Boards
- The Crises Centre
- The Churches and the related activities

And, I've left out the many more of the activities by private individuals, businesses, etc. who contribute money and time to this Community.

As a taxpayer in the Halton Region I truly appreciate every hour of service contributed by the organizations and individuals because their contribution represents millions of dollars.

I am very strongly convinced that the two projects the Nursing Home and the Municipal Centre are critical in the future development and direction of this Community.

Furthermore, if the projects could go forward without capital debt the overall cost to the Community would be minimized substantially.

To achieve debt-free funding will require a broad based sustained campaign in the Community. I would be more than pleased to meet with representatives of the various organizations to help structure a campaign strategy.

I also personally pledge \$2500 to each of the two projects to get the campaign started.

Perhaps I could urge those circulating petitions to make a similar contribution and put their efforts to fund-raising rather than criticism.

Sincerely,
A.E. (Fred) Morris,
Administrator,
Georgetown and
District Memorial Hospital

Back issues

10 years ago

November 28, 1973
It has been a long time, but Acton Sabres are finally back in first place all alone.

Regional chairman Allan Masson feels confident headquarters for the new Halton Region can be established in Burlington or Oakville.

Eight top appointments for the new town of Halton Hills were recommended by the Halton Hills council last week. They are Clerk-Administrator Doug Pritchard; deputy clerk-administrator Delmar French; Treasurer Lloyd Peterson; Deputy Treasurer Grant Usher; Town Engineer Peter Morris; Deputy Town Engineer Ben Pitoni; Chief Building Inspector Douglas Sargent; Purchasing Agent Hugh Patterson.

Con. Roy Wood is leaving the OPP for the Peel Region force. He will be working in Chinguacousy. Mr. and Mrs. Wood and daughter Kim live on Jeffrey Ave.

The site of the new Legion hall is a sea of mud today and work of block laying is down to stop it. Trucks have been mired in the sloppy ground.

20 years ago

November 28, 1963
Acton Council approved an agreement to supply Beardmore and Co. with water from the Main Street South spring. According to the terms of the agreement the town will install the water mains and provide the equipment necessary. On completion of the work Beardmore agreed to pay the cost of the work up to \$22,000.

William Maddox received a broken nose, arm and leg when he was struck by a car while crossing Main St. Mr. Maddox was taken to Guelph General Hospital by taxi and was expected to fully recover.

Fate seemed to play a large part in the misfortune of an Acton area motorist when his vehicle sustained over \$200 damage in two separate accidents on two separate nights.

50 years ago

November 23, 1913
The annual meeting of Acton Citizens Band was held in the band hall at the arena. Bandmaster Charles Mason thanked the boys for their co-operation. J. McGeachie is past president, R. Parkinson president, K. Williams vice-president, N. Gibson secretary-treasurer. N.F. Moore assistant band leader, B. Ramsden librarian, T. Nicol assistant, G. Simpson caretaker.

The inspection of D. Company of Lorne Rifles was held at the Legion Hall on Frederick St. Capt. Early and Lieuts. Buchanan and Early were in charge.

One of the largest crowds to attend a farm stock sale in the district in some time took in the auction at the farm of Melvin Burns east of Rockwood. Prices were satisfactory with cows averaging around \$50. The sale was conducted by Roy Hindley.

75 years ago

November 26, 1909
The general impression prevails that the financial depression has gone and that good times have really put in an appearance again. Nearly every man takes a hopeful view of the future.

An important new industry at Milton is the P.L. Robertson Manufacturing Co., for the manufacture of the Robertson Patent-head screw. The company already has a large trade in this novel invention. This new screw has a square recess in the head, obviating all chances of the driver slipping.

The members of Acton Lodge A.O.U.W. and their ladies attended a banquet at the Station Hotel. After the banquet the parlors were thrown open and a most enjoyable entertainment was provided by the Leechman and Arthurs Orchestra.

100 years ago

November 29, 1883
On Saturday morning a well dressed young man visited the Livery Stable of Mr. Edward Matthews and hired a horse and buggy, as he stated, to visit friends in Nassagawaya. About five o'clock Mr. Matthews received a telegram from the Guelph Chief of Police asking him to claim his property, as a young man had been arrested on suspicion for offering the buggy for sale at a ridiculously low price. It was later found that the man was really a woman in men's clothing. The woman, who was a sewer, had tried to sell the buggy because she had a payment on her machine and had no money. The woman was bailed out of jail by her mother and is to appear in court to face charges next week.

Lions send thanks

Dear Sir:
The Lions Club of Acton would like to thank all those who helped make the Santa Claus parade a success, especially the management of Beardmore, Pezson Farm Equipment, Gord Hitchcock and Eddy Thatcher and Leo Gallagher (Guelph), and all those who gave their personal time and effort to build the floats. Without the help of these people the Lions Club, with the small membership we have, could not have put in four floats in the parade.

This year to date the Lions Club

of Acton has contributed in donations over \$2,000 for various projects to help the community. If there are citizens in Acton who are interested in serving the community, and would like to join a service club, the Lions Club of Acton would be pleased to have you as a member.

For further information please call Leon Peter Papillon (president) at 853-0612 or Leon Hag Assadourian (secretary) at 853-3515.

Peter Papillon
President