

Eight reasons to oppose new municipal complex

Dear Editor:

As a concerned citizen I have made a serious effort to understand the issues surrounding the Municipal Complex affair. I have concluded that council's plans for the purchase and development of the Stevens' property and the construction of a new municipal complex are not acceptable. Here are my reasons:

1. **Legality:** The Municipal Act does permit a council to purchase more land than is required for municipal needs and to sell off the surplus if by doing so they obtain a more advantageous overall deal. However it does not give clear permission for a council to turn itself into a development company, speculate in real estate and seek to make a profit by turning raw land into saleable building lots. Informed legal opinion has suggested that the courts could veto this planned action. At the very least the council should have obtained a clear ruling that their plans would be acceptable prior to spending a large amount of public funds.

2. **Acceptability:** Many of the citizens of this town already have enough trouble with the existence of inefficient crown corporations and the intrusions of government enterprise into the private sector. We do not elect governments to have them turn around and com-

pete directly and unfairly with private citizens. We are resigned to the fact that Ottawa does it all the time, and now even Queen's Park. But surely Halton Hills doesn't have to follow suit.

3. **Cost:** The suggested cost of \$4.4 million noted in the council's own study is in 1983 dollars and doesn't even provide for a furnished building. Government building programs have a sorry way of going over budget. By the time the Complex is built it will likely cost \$10 million or more. We don't need that type of extravaganzas. We don't live in the Big Apple and we neither want nor need a world class city hall.

4. **Payment:** The council has so far failed to account for how it will finance such a plan. If federal and provincial grants do exist then these should be named and shown to be applicable. Otherwise the council is obliged to state publically the probable level of increased tax burden which residents will have to shoulder. The suggestion that every one of us could be facing an increase of 10-20 per cent increase in our property taxes for the next decade is probably not far off. People don't want a complex which will cost that much.

5. **Other Sites:** No information received from council to date indicates that a full study was done of alternatives to the Stevens' estate.

It would even appear that much of the information which was studied on alternative sites was submitted by a gentleman who was acting as the agent of the Stevens' estate. He may have been a fine and honest man, but no astute consumer would ever ask a GM salesman for his opinion of Ford and Chrysler and then make a decision based on that opinion alone. Further, it would appear that no study was done during the past year on the Trafalgar Rd. site which gives adequate proof to the public that this site is not acceptable. I am forced to conclude that our council's mind was already made up long ago and that the skimpy material on other sites is merely window dressing.

6. **Misleading Promises:** For the council to claim publically, and for one councillor to claim in the paper that the land would be "FREE" is an unfortunate and very damaging assault on its credibility. The land is not free. If by the time council sells off part of the property as serviced lots there is found to be no legal impediment, and there is an adequate supply of water, and the real estate market does not drop significantly then and only then will the profits from the sale of land cover the original purchase price. No one can possibly guarantee the future in this way. Yet that is exactly what the

council is claiming to do by stating that the land will be free.

7. **Is it really needed?** Council has claimed that the present cramped and decentralized municipal facilities lead to low staff morale and inefficient operation. While the present offices are admittedly far from palatial and at best somewhat tacky, they are still a lot better than the surroundings in which many of our citizens have to work every day. The office staff whom the public has the pleasure of meeting when they do business with the town are really quite a fine looking lot—hardly the suffering victims of horrendous working conditions. There is no question that some improvement is required. But that doesn't mean that we need to spend a fortune. It has been suggested that an infinitely more successful way to raise staff morale would be to take the funds that would have to be spent for a new complex and divide them among the staff as a Christmas bonus. The effect on morale would be stunning. Neither is efficiency a very compelling reason, since by efficiency they do not mean that we would have better roads, or better snow removal, or better parks, or better traffic lights or lower taxes. Efficiency here merely means greater convenience and ease of interaction among the council and staff. Again, there would appear to

be some need to improve on the present situation. But surely a modest improvement at reasonable cost is what is called for.

8. **Invalid supporting arguments:** A letter appeared in the paper from a supporter which cleverly implied advantages to a municipal complex which on closer examination are blatantly invalid. To imply that if the municipal complex doesn't go ahead then the nursing home would be in jeopardy is hard to believe. Those responsible citizens who planned and are now building the nursing home were never so foolish as to pin their hopes for its financial well-being on some speculative real estate deal of the future. The nursing home will be maintained regardless of the future of the municipal complex. Were this not so we would immediately demand the resignations of those responsible for its undertaking. Trying to raise the spectre of the unfortunate elderly being caused to suffer if the complex doesn't go ahead is a shoddy political chimer.

Likewise attempting to suggest that unemployment will increase if the complex is stopped is misleading. It won't. The nursing home and the hospital will not employ any more people or any less people to any significant degree. Neither will the town. If anything, the vaunted efficiency of municipal

government which will supposedly be achieved by having all the town functions under one roof and the suggestion that this efficiency will thus lead to a less costly municipal government can only mean one thing. Fewer municipal staff.

Dragging in the good names of virtually every social and volunteer agency in town and making it appear that all these groups are on the side of the supporters of the complex is a sad, clumsy and desperate effort to appeal to people's emotions in the absence of any credible factual arguments. These groups have not publically said that they support the complex and any attempt to picture them as having done so does more to expose the hollowness of the position than anything else.

May I urge the councillors who voted for the purchase of the property (and thus obviously for its planned development and the erection of a major complex) to reconsider.

May I urge the citizens of Georgetown, Acton and Eaquesing to study the issue carefully and, if you reach the same conclusion I have, to sign the petition and let the council know how you feel.

Respectfully submitted,
Craig Copland
RR1, Georgetown

Halton Hills Animal Control adds Eramosa to its area

Halton Hills Animal Control has been hired to patrol Eramosa township in 1984.

made the decision at a recent council meeting, at a cost of \$3,600 for the service. Any Eramosa animals caught will be impounded in Limehouse.

Eramosa Township Council

Two car collision

A collision at the intersection of Main St. and Thompson Rd. in Milton Thursday morning resulted in damage to cars driven by two local men.

William Manes, 23, of RR 4 Rockwood, had about \$750 damage done to the car he was driving, report police. A car driven by Robert Johnson, 36, of Georgetown had about \$1,000 damage to his car and he suffered minimal injuries.

Issue wrecker's licence

Even though it is quite late in the year, at the request of the owner Halton Hills general committee last week agreed to issue a wrecking yard licence for 1983 for Lee's Auto Wreckers, RR1 Acton.

Bylaw Enforcement Officer Jack Lusty reported last week that Lee's had a valid licence for a number of years but in 1982 it ceased operations on a day to day basis.

At first the Town couldn't get a hold of the owner to have "remedial work" done and later after locating the owner found the "required work" was being

done on weekends. Just recently the yard conformed to the existing bylaw.

However, Lee's will have to do more work, Lusty reported, before it will conform to the new regulations which take effect January 1, 1984. No licences will be issued to any wrecking yards next year until they conform to the new regulations.

Lusty reported the owners of Lee's wants a 1983 licence anyway so its licence won't lapse and has paid the fee. He added it appears no salvage operations are currently taking place at the yard.

Osprige

Local gals earn 4-H honors

by Doris Fines

A pleasant evening of entertainment followed a pot luck supper in Knox Presbyterian Church recently. The Sunday School children performed well in their various skits, recitations, songs, and music. It ended with the nativity scene and all the children were on stage in the background to sing carols.

It wouldn't be a Christmas concert without Santa, and that jolly fellow arrived, alias David Grundy, with his bag of goodies and treats to hand out to the children. He said he would have a hard time filling some of their orders, as one wanted a snowmobile and some didn't know what they wanted.

Recently the school choir from Ross R. MacKay, Hillsburgh, accompanied by Mrs. Bonnie Schotach, their choir director, sang at Knox Church, Osprige.


Robert and Agnes Keating, George and Suzanna, visited recently with Bob's sister and brother-in-law Ruth and Ernie Ford at Oshawa.

Michael, Jeremy and Andrea Bruce of Carp, spent a couple of days with their grandparents Ward and Flora Bruce, while their parents Drs. Barry and Carol Bruce attended a medical convention in Toronto. They were all at Ward's for an early Christmas family dinner, including also Garnet and Catherine Bruce, Jordan, Jesse, and Adam of Toronto, and Gordon and Jean Johnston of Acton.

Achievement night for the 4-H Home-making project, Ontario Heritage, was held at John Black Public School, Fergus, on December 5.

The Mimosa Apple Dumpling Gang did a skit on, celebrating the multi-cultural way, which took the form of a little party around a Christmas tree. Lisa Swackhamer was the English host, and the others were guests, bringing foods of different countries and telling the traditions of Christmas in that country. Vicky Cargill represented Ireland; Shirley Fletcher, Scotland; Claudia Rabstein, Germany; Tammy Swackhamer, Poland; and Christina Goring, France.

Vicky Cargill and Lisa Swackhamer received their county honor certificate and pin. Shirley Fletcher gave the highlights of her trip to the C.N.E. which was sponsored by the Department of Agriculture. There were 13 clubs taking part in the Achievement activities at Fergus.



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Rockwood

Men help fight rural Milton fire

by Barbara Funk

Eramosa-Rockwood Fire Department answered one call this week. They were called out to a home in Nassagaweya on the corner of 25 sideroad and the Fourth line. The fire had started in the chimney but progressed to the house by the time the Rockwood department arrived.

The fire was in Milton territory, so Rockwood returned home when the Milton department arrived.

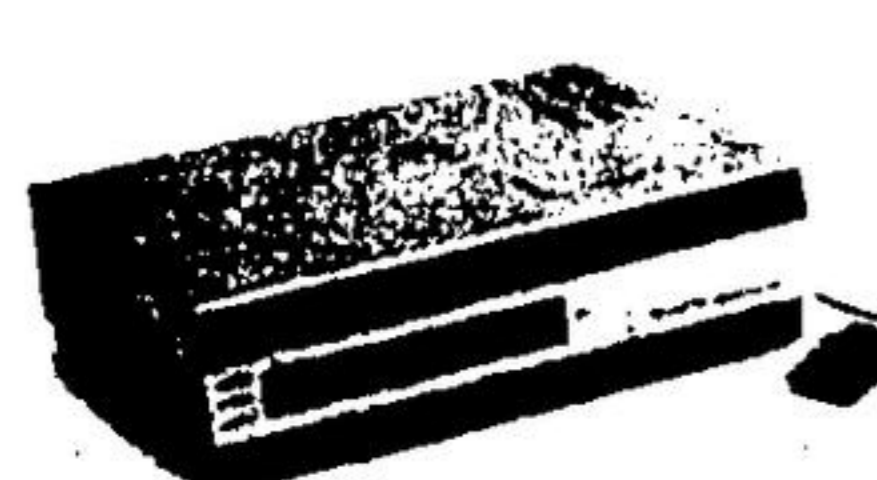
Christmas Eve service at the Presbyterian Church begins at 8.30 p.m. Everyone is welcome to come and join in the singing during the service of lessons and carols.

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