

# Town getting into development "grey" area to province — Reed

As part of his continuing investigation of the planned Halton Hills purchase of the Stevens' property, Halton-Burlington MPP Julian Reed has written to Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Claude Bennett seeking a statement.

In releasing his letter to Bennett this week, Reed also wrote this newspaper noting "the answers my office has been getting from the Ministry would tend to see this area of municipalities becoming involved in development as a 'grey' area."

"I believe that a statement on paper from the minister would make most interesting reading for both the Halton Hills council and concerned citizens," Reed wrote.

Following is the text of his letter to Bennett:

"Recent events in the Town of Halton Hills regarding the proposal to purchase land for a future municipal complex has raised the question of whether this kind of action the town has proposed is in some contravention of the municipal act. A citizens' brief presented to council last Monday outlines the concerns more concisely than I could possibly put into this letter and I therefore enclose a copy for your information.

"The subjects in question, of course, are twofold, namely the entering into the



Halton-Burlington MPP Julian Reed

business of land development by a municipality and the utilization of lot levies.

"Are there any precedents for this kind of action in other municipalities in the province? Has the question of the legalities of lot levies themselves been settled?"

"Your answers to these questions would certainly help to guide both the citizens who have raised them and the council who I am

sure want to do the right thing."

### Question legality

A citizens' group's brief to council last week has raised a number of questions about the legality of the Town buying the whole Stevens' property on Maple Ave. in Georgetown. Reed was on hand for the presentation, at the request of members of the citizens' group, and pledged afterwards to use his position as the area's MPP to try and get more answers for the public.

The citizens' group suggested that while it is perfectly legal for council to buy land for a future municipal complex, it may be another matter entirely to buy more land than the Town requires.

### Buying more than need

Numerous Town reports have shown the amount of land required for a municipal complex would be seven or eight acres, but Halton Hills has offered \$600,000 for about 29 acres. The deal closes the end of March.

The Municipal Act states that a municipality can buy more land than it needs if by purchasing the entire parcel it gets the land at a more reasonable price and on terms more advantageous to the

municipality."

The citizens question if this is in fact the case. A letter from Robert Nicholl, Longmore Developments, received by council September 13, 1983, states the vendor is "now willing" to discuss selling the Town just the portion it needs for the complex. One councillor advised the group that if a true the vendor would have sold a smaller portion instead of the whole property but wanted \$70,000 an acre. However, a number of other councillors, both those who voted for and against the purchase, said they know nothing about this offer to sell less land and there are no written public records of the Town pursuing buying just seven acres, discussing the price or making an offer.

The citizens also questioned some councillors saying they weren't voting for a municipal complex but just a land purchase, since if they don't intend to build a complex in the future the Town has no legal right to buy the land.

### Binding future councils?

Is the council also binding future councils to spending on a complex if it isn't built before the end of this term, the citizens' brief asked.

They noted the Town shouldn't be getting into the development business and land speculation by planning to sell off the excess Stevens' property for housing to raise money. They noted the Town's only allowed to be involved in land banking for industrial and residential development for low income subsidized housing in conjunction with the province.

### Lot levies use questioned

Another concern brought up by the citizens and being pursued by Reed is the Town's practise for several years now of putting lot levies in a reserve fund for the land purchase and municipal complex. Lot levies, the brief maintained, should only be used to "cover additional cost to the municipality which is created by the subdivision." This hasn't been done and the citizens ask "who then paid for the additional load created by these subdivisions? Did the residents of the new lots get the services which they paid for?"

Hospital land not Town problem, see page 3; Who did Nicholl work for? and Why need more space when staff is smaller, turn to page B3; plus draft plan for development of Stevens' land from August 1982, see page B3.

**A. E. LEPAGE**  
REAL ESTATE SERVICES LTD. • REALTOR  
170 GUELPH STREET  
GEORGETOWN  
877-0173

The **Acton Free Press**  
A METROLAND COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

**GEORGETOWN**  
PONTIAC - BUICK  
PONTIAC - BUICK  
GMC TRUCKS  
338 GUELPH ST.  
GEORGETOWN  
877-0149

One Hundred and Ninth Year — Issue 28

ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 1984

32 Pages — Thirty Cents

## Councillors told

# Acton needs its own ambulance

Acton should have its own ambulance four members of Halton Hills council were told Friday afternoon at Acton's council drop-in.

Kerwin McPhail said "it's about time Acton had one (ambulance) of its own, one that goes somewhere other than Georgetown Hospital."

Mayor Russ Miller, Councillors Jake Kuiken, Dave Whiting and Ross Knechtel agreed it's a subject which should be raised at the Region, though they held out little hope of Acton getting its own ambulance.

Thirty-five years ago Acton had its own private ambulance service, yet today people must wait 20 to 25 minutes sometimes for an ambulance from Georgetown, McPhail observed.

McPhail suggested that counting the surrounding area, Acton has a population of about 10,000 people and much smaller centres have ambulance service so this community should have its own ambulance too.

He asked if the reason people are taken to Georgetown Hospital instead of Guelph, as requested by many using the service, was because of pressure on ambulance attendants from higher-ups to bring business to Georgetown Hospital so that facility won't "fail". None of the councillors had ever heard of such a notion and discounted the theory.

McPhail reported he's had occasion to call the ambulance a few times in the past few years and had to practically "threaten litigation" to be taken to Guelph Hospital instead of Georgetown Hospital.

He's also checked the ambulance service out with local physicians and found they report that if you're in an accident and don't have family with you able to say you should be taken to Guelph Hospital instead of Georgetown Hospital, you're taken to Georgetown. On one occasion a doctor on the scene said the victim should go to Guelph, but the ambulance still went to Georgetown.

McPhail emphasized he wasn't blaming the occasional slowness of getting ambulances here and the problem of being taken to Georgetown instead of Guelph on the volunteer ambulance attendants.

"Ambulance service is spread too thinly around here, so Acton gets bad service," he charged.

This isn't the first time McPhail has raised this concern. He recalled going to both Miller and Councillor Pam Sheldon about the problem a couple of years ago, but

he never got an answer. Miller acknowledged the concern, which he has never heard raised by anyone else in Acton and area, had slipped his mind and suggested that one reason McPhail was upset was that he and Sheldon hadn't followed-up on his request.

Councillor Dave Whiting said an ambulance study was done for the region and a central dispatch system based in Mississauga is coming in the future.

Currently, Whiting understood, the policy is that a person can request to be taken to Guelph Hospital and the request will be followed. An ambulance can also be dispatched to Acton from Guelph, not just from Georgetown, he said. Whiting said he wasn't aware of the kinds of problems McPhail was talking about for Acton people wanting to be taken to Guelph Hospital.

Ambulance service is a provincial concern, that level of government has the control, Knechtel observed.

That was true, but there was still no reason why Halton Hills council couldn't lead the drive to get ambulance service for Acton and request one, McPhail retorted.

Whiting said since he sits on social services committee at the region and the region deals with the province on hospitals and ambulances, he'd raise the issue at that level of government. The councillors all agreed it would be faster for a direct approach at the region, rather than Halton Hills sending a resolution to regional council.

When the subject is raised at region, councillors should go armed with "materials" to help make the case for an Acton ambulance, McPhail urged.

Knechtel said a request for an Acton ambulance from Halton Hills would be rejected by the province, the region would have a better chance of seeing its request met.

If a person is injured in an accident they should be taken to the best hospital in the area, and that would be Guelph not Georgetown, Whiting declared. He said he could see being taken to Georgetown instead of Guelph could present real problems since more serious cases are sent from Georgetown to Brampton and that's just that much further away from home.

Acton is too small for three or four ambulances, Kulken said. However, McPhail said, if the community had one ambulance.

(Continued on page 3)



Jennifer Koprowski and Wendy Graham (foreground) took advantage of the cold, snowy weather and slipped down the embankment beside the Acton Citizens' Band Hall. Lanny Sleep, Eddie Sleep and

Christine Graham (background) soon followed their playmates down the slope. Photo by MARK HOLMES.

# Fewer out of work

The employment picture in Halton Hills has improved somewhat over last year, according to an official of the Canada Employment Centre in Georgetown, which also serves Acton and area.

Last year at this time there were 2,134 people registered with the office and 1,566 people on unemployment benefits.

This year there are 2,069 people registered for work and 1,383 collecting benefits.

"We had more seasonal layoffs last year and I think that accounts for the difference," said Lillian Hughton, Branch Manager of the Canada employment Centre.

While nationally, youth unemployment tops 20 per cent, Halton Hills and area youth don't account for the highest percentage of unemployment in the area, she said.

"We find the highest percentage amongst the age group 25 to 44."

Hughton said that while those aged 16 to 24 are not the largest group of unemployed in the area, over the years they have been the most active when it comes to looking for work through the employment centre.

"They appear to be more eager to get work," she said.

She suggested this was probably because

they have established less financial security than older people and have the least amount of job seniority to fall back on when awaiting recall from layoff.

### Inside

Halton Hills has passed a bylaw authorizing the borrowing of \$3 million if it becomes necessary. See page 3.

Is there a communications gap between Library Board and council? More on page 3.

The town hall has received another grant for \$2,000. Details on page 8.

What kind of car Peter Pomeroy will drive was the subject of great debate at region last week. More on page B1.

See the front of Newsmakers for a story on Mac Sproul's job as Halton Sheriff.

December was a costly month for snow service in Halton Hills. The bill was \$105,000. Engineer Robert Austin discusses budget problems in the article on page B6.

Greene is coming this spring to AHS. Turn to page B8.

This week thru the lens is on page 5.

Reed

How good thing about Canadian winters here's not much snow or ice.



Audrey Dunn accepts the keys to her new Chevy Chevette from Bill Yundi, the owner of Acton Pharmacy. Mrs. Dunn won the car in the Get Away, Give Away contest sponsored by Guardian Drugs.

# Big winner of '84 car in drug store contest

According to Bill Yundi, the owner of the local Guardian Drug franchise, Acton Pharmacy, it was the first time since he opened a pharmacy in Acton 17 years ago that he has ever seen a big prize won locally in the various contests held each year.

"The contest ran only in Ontario," said Yundi, "and it was sponsored by Guardian Drugs which is a subsidiary of Drug Trading Company Limited from Toronto."

Mrs. Dunn said she filled out an entry form for the contest last summer and picked up her car Wednesday. She said she doesn't know if she'll keep the car or not, but it sure is nice driving around in the little blue hatch back.

Thanks to a Guardian Drugs "Get Away, Give Away" contest last summer, a lucky Acton resident is driving around town in a brand new car.

Audrey Dunn said she was really surprised last November when she received a phone call telling her she was the winner of a 1984 Chevy Chevette.

Mrs. Dunn, who is married and has two children, 10 and six, said her husband was just as surprised as she was because it was the first major prize the area residents have ever won.

"We've won little things like door prizes before, but this is the first time we've won anything really big," said Mrs. Dunn.