

SIDEWALK SALE!

Planner calls for town involvement

Georgetown Market July 2nd - 3rd - 4th - 5th

The first study since 1973 of Georgetown's commercial areas—with the major focus on the downtown core—has concluded that town involvement in stimulating interest and growth is necessary if the slow decline of the Main Street business section is to be stopped.

Town planner Mario Venditti presented his report on the town's commercial zones to last week's meeting of the subsidiary planning board. He explained that the downtown business section is becoming the town's chief "financial district", supported by a number of banks, lawyers' offices and small business.

Yet the outlook for store owners along Main Street is not as bright.

"Actually a number of merchants," Mr. Venditti said, "are waiting to get out of the downtown core. I would estimate that 10 to 15 percent are now waiting for the right moment to move."

"They don't see anything happening over the next few years. There's nothing to stimulate the downtown core."

However, he believes that if they could see some future they might be willing to pour some capital back into the

businesses." The town planner predicted that the future could be very bright for the Main Street businessman. He noted that a number of present and future housing subdivisions will ring the downtown core in five years time providing the area with a large supporting consumer populace.

One of the prerequisites in drawing them downtown, he said would be the formation of a strong and active downtown merchants association.

Mr. Venditti again brought up the idea of a permanent downtown pedestrian shopping mall along Main Street—along the lines of Sparks Street in Ottawa. He warned, however, that there are many pros and cons to the mall venture.

"We have to remember that traffic flow and exposure is very important to the downtown merchants."

Outlining some of the methods by which the town could get actively involved in the up-grading of the downtown core Mr. Venditti said that, perhaps, one of the first steps might be to have the town take over the operation of the parking areas, presently operated by a group of

downtown businessmen. The revenue gained from the parking lots' operations could be used to pay for detailed studies of the centre's needs. Road improvements, including much needed work on Water Street, would be another step the town could take.

Councillor Ernie Sykes added his support to Mr. Venditti's hint of more municipal assistance for the downtown area. "It's about time the town became more involved."

The planning board has given the planning staff the go-ahead to continue its present examination of the town's business areas.

"There are many alternatives for the downtown core which we could consider," concluded Mr. Venditti. "But we must begin now. The downtown core of any town is a very precious part of that town. If we continue along the lines we are presently going, Georgetown's core will sharply decline."

The other commercial areas of town—the two major plazas and the highway strip along Highway 7—will continue to prosper. Mr. Venditti noted. The major problem with the town's chief new area, the Georgetown Market Centre, he said, was poor

initial design. He told the planning board that plans presently before them to expand the plaza should see the Market Centre develop into a "regional centre" that could better serve the expanding Georgetown-Acton region.

Elementary teachers want improvements on Halton's buses

The Halton Elementary Teachers' Association expressed great discontent at their recent annual meeting over the busing system in Halton county. Bus safety was the main area of discussion and numerous recommendations were examined which have now been forwarded to the various committees of the HETA.

The executive of the group is examining areas of: expansion of school bus patrol programs so that more buses serve the Halton elementary schools; a list be made up and submitted to all teachers and principals of the county containing

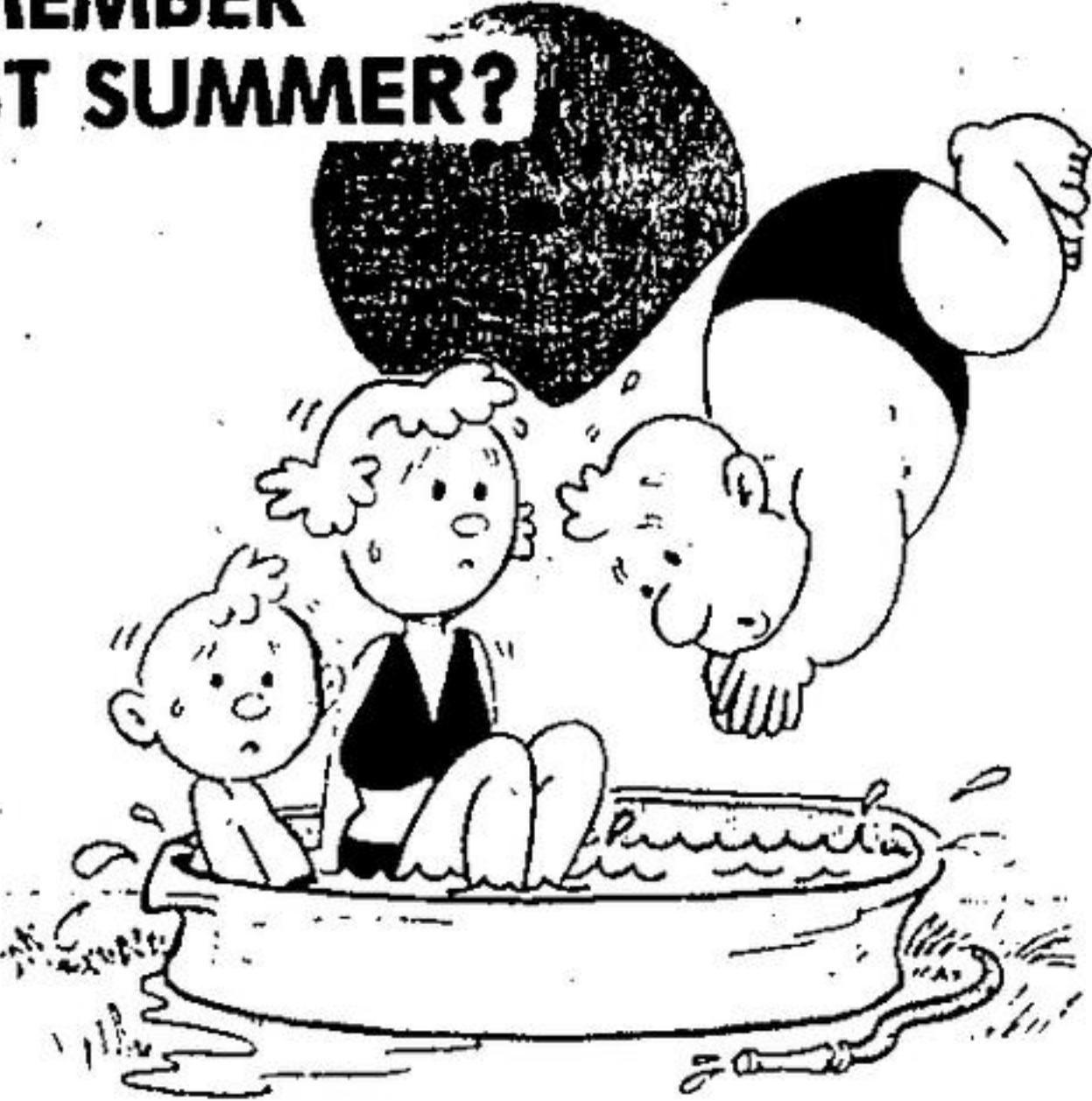
material on school bus safety; the Halton Regional Police be approached in hopes of organizing a regular in-service program of bus safety procedures for all principals and teachers; and a hoped-for approach to the ministry of transportation and communications with a request that the entire school bus seating arrangement be revised with the main aim of eliminating standing in the buses.

Other concerns which are being forwarded to the professional development committee and the staff-board committee cover: a "no

standing policy on the school buses and an in-depth study to determine if adult supervision on school buses would be beneficial. They are also demanding that school bus drivers should wear seat belts when ever transporting children and must be qualified in first aid or else agree to take a course in first aid within a specific time limited.

These recommendations, which will receive further action, are to protect the children who travel by bus each day to and from the elementary schools in Halton Hills.

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