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the HERALD

Home Newspaper of Halton Hills

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OMB, court appeals planned

Town renews support for hydro fight



SUCCESSFUL SWIMMER

Heather Clarke was the most successful GDHS swimmer at the OFSAA championships held over the weekend. Clarke, a senior, finished a strong seventh in the backstroke event. Clarke was also a member of a relay team that finished fourth, the Hebs' best showing. Coach Tom Adams was very pleased with his

swimmers performances as they all bettered their previous best personal best times. See page 27 in Sports Week for more on the meet. (Herald photo by Drew Clarke)

By PAUL DORSEY
Herald staff writer

Having already invested about \$6,500 so far, town council has decided to maintain its opposition to Ontario Hydro's Bruce to Milton transmission corridor by launching appeals before the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) and a divisional court.

After hearing town solicitor Ray Steele advise that there are "some fairly good grounds to appeal," the Feb. 5 OMB ruling, council voted 8-4 during a special session last Wednesday to channel another \$3,000 to \$5,000 into its battle against the 500,000-volt corridor.

Applications are being filed with the divisional court of appeal and with the OMB itself which, if approved, will allow the town to appeal the OMB

decision ordering council to amend the town's official plan and zoning bylaw so the corridor can be constructed along Halton Hills' Fifth Concession.

RECORDED VOTE

In a recorded vote Mayor Pete Pomeroy and councillors Ed Wood, Ross Knechtel, Russ Miller, George Malby, Pat Patterson, John McDonald and Marilyn Serjeantson elected to follow the solicitor's advice and proceed with appeals. Those opposing the move were councillors Les Dudy, Walter Blehn, Roy Booth and Harry Levy. Coun. Mike Armstrong was absent from the meeting.

Council members continue to entertain hopes that some progress will be made in the dispute through a forthcoming meeting at Queen's Park that will bring corridor opponents

together with Premier William Davis and energy minister James Auld. Mayor Pomeroy has been invited to attend the meeting, for which a date has still to be set, along with Halton regional chairman Jack Ruffis and officials of the Interested Citizens Group (ICG).

Mr. Steele and his colleague, Fred Helson, who represented the town's interests at the nine-day OMB hearing in January, outlined three avenues of appeal for council last week. They advised against an appeal to the provincial Cabinet itself, noting that the corridor issue has already been considered at that level on several previous occasions.

GLARING ERRORS

Mr. Steele warned that 60 per cent of all appeals made to the divisional court of appeal are unsuccessful, but pointed out that there are "some glaring errors in the OMB's Feb. 5 ruling. Portions of the evidence presented at the hearing, he said, appear to have not even been considered in the board's decision.

Explaining that an OMB decision can be changed after the fact, unlike decisions of the courts, Mr. Steele told council that a new OMB hearing may be warranted as a result of information about Hydro's load forecasts that has come to light since the hearing ended.

It has become "obvious", he said, that Hydro has grossly over-estimated public demand for hydroelectric power both for current and future needs. The Bruce to Milton corridor may be among the Hydro projects that can be shelved as a result, he contended.

Taking any of the three appeal routes will require the town to obtain a copy of the OMB hearing transcripts, Mr. Steele noted which generally cost about \$1,500 each. With that cost included, he estimated the overall expenditure for an appeal hearing between \$3,000 and \$5,000. Mr. Helson added that the solicitors would be preparing for the hearing without charging the town for research time.

SUPPORT SURPRISES

Saying he was surprised by the amount of support offered to the town by Halton regional council the week before, Coun. Russ Miller said the town would be "very remiss" to abandon its opposition to the corridor now. The six-year-old battle is now on its "last lap," he said.

Council members discussed

Police problem is leadership report says

By LORI TAYLOR
Herald staff writer

A lack of leadership and the failure to integrate the area police forces into a true regional force are at the bottom of the problems facing the Halton Regional Police Force, according to the Ontario Police Commission (OPC) report on the force released last Thursday.

The report has been in the hands of the Halton Regional Police Commission since February 6, but the release of the report to the public was delayed in order to allow the commission to discuss the report with the OPC, the chief and deputy-chief and the Halton Regional Police Association.

Before handing out copies of the report, Oakville Mayor Harry Barrett, chairman of the commission, said the commission is in "basic agreement" with the content of the report, and implementation of some of the recommendations has already begun. The records department which was the original subject of the report, is presently being reorganized with the assistance of an advisor from the OPC.

LOCAL COMMISSION

The local commission originally asked the OPC to conduct a study of the records department alone, but following the issuing of a report by the police association on poor morale among members of the force, and complaints from the Crown Attorney's office that preparation for court cases by Halton officers was frequently inadequate, the commission requested that the scope of the report be expanded to study the entire force.

"This Report... stresses

that the most important facet of all is leadership and it is our consensus that this has been lacking to date," the introduction to the report says.

The lack of leadership has contributed to the failure to achieve integration of the area police forces into a cohesive regional force, the report said.

"An initial problem, common to all Regional police forces, is integration. This cannot be achieved solely on a physical plane. It is essential that all the members accept, as quickly as possible, the reality of their changed situation and transfer their loyalties to the new force," the report said. "The initiative for this shift in attitude, from the competitive rivalry of separate, but neighboring forces to the combined force, must come from the senior officers."

"It is not enough to pay lip service to the concept," the report continues. "The sincerity of their acceptance must be obvious to the remainder of the force otherwise divisions will remain, insignia and a common headquarters building

Continued on page two

Continued on page two

This Week



JOHN SOMMERS

Professional gallery

Georgetown has something rare for towns this size—an art gallery which displays work by professional artists, as well as works by such talented local artists as Marjorie Nazer. Gallery Sol owner John Sommers talked to The Herald about art and operating a commercial gallery in a small town. Page 9

GLT's play judged

The Georgetown Little Theatre's production of When We Are Married played in town last week and one member of the audience watched the proceedings a little more closely than the rest. He's Frederick Thury who is adjudicating the play for the Central Ontario Drama League Festival. His comments appear in today's paper. Page 18

Raiders clinch first

Colin Gordon scored the winning goal for the Georgetown Raiders in their 5-3 win over the Merchants in Dundas Friday. The win gave the Raiders their first-ever league pennant. Page 28

New Acton plaza is rejected, developer plans OMB appeal

A proposal is currently being considered by downtown Acton merchants that would unite two existing grocery stores in an apparent bid to meet the demands of shoppers who last month in support of the Zehr's food chain outlet proposed for construction on Highway 7.

Paul Nielson, spokesman for merchants involved in Acton's downtown Business Improvement Area (BIA), revealed the amalgamation proposal to the town planning board last Tuesday. Following his presentation, the board voted to reject a proposal by Landawn Shopping Centres Ltd. to build a 60,000-square foot commercial

plaza on Acton's eastern boundary.

As a result of the board's decision, the plaza proposal appears destined to become the subject of a future Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearing. Landawn president Jerry Sprackman commented following the meeting that he intends to appeal the decision before the OMB, citing extensive public support for the proposal.

Ratified by council Monday night, the board's decision was virtually unanimous. Coun. Ed Wood, a downtown Acton merchant, declared a conflict of interest in the matter and did not participate in the debate or

voting. Also excusing himself from the discussion was Mayor Pete Pomeroy, whose ownership of a downtown Georgetown retail business led him to speculate that he too may have a conflict of interest.

One of 10 speakers who addressed the planning board prior to its final consideration of the proposal, Mr. Nielson reiterated his claim that even large-scale commercial outlets could be located in downtown Acton. He reaffirmed the BIA's contention that the development of an outlying plaza would financially cripple the downtown merchants' ongoing efforts to beautify the central business core and attract new

business. Mr. Nielson told The Herald following the meeting that property negotiations stemming from the proposal to amalgamate two of Acton's three grocery outlets are still in the initial stage and declined to elaborate further. He commented only that the amalgamation, if finalized, could involve the closing of a downtown sidestreet.

COMPLAINTS LIST

The inadequacy of existing retail outlets in Acton, and particularly grocery stores, ranked chief among the complaints listed by Acton shoppers at the planning board's Feb. 14 public meeting. A shortage of parking space downtown and a lack of shopping variety led many shoppers to travel out of town to do their weekly shopping, according to comments made at that time.

Acton resident Lloyd Sankey an architect with the Toronto firm of Sankey, Javosky, Werleman and Guy, countered claims made by Landawn and Zehr's officials at the same meeting that there is no available space downtown to locate a major grocery outlet.

Mr. Sankey identified two key areas of the downtown core where he speculated that buildings and property may be available to accommodate a 100,000-square foot plaza or retail outlet. At one end of Mill Street, he pointed out, an area that now features the IGA store and the Dominion Hotel abuts a farm to the rear of the street. To the east, where a CNR line crosses Mill Street, exists a "vast wasteland" referred to as the railway sidings, he said, which is adjacent to the Force Electric plant, the sale of which has been considered the past.

Mr. Sankey commented that "the BIA's done a very good job," but has thus far limited its efforts to "cosmetic" improvements. Instead, he said, "surgery" is needed downtown.

Actonian Jack Carpenter reminded the board that the community already offers 18,000 square feet, even though provincial guidelines suggest only 14,000 square feet for a population the size of Acton's.

Mr. Carpenter expressed doubt that shoppers would be attracted to the Landawn plaza from out of town, as Landawn officials had suggested.

Proposed budget may mean a tax hike

The Halton board of education will vote March 15 to accept or reject a proposed \$93.5 million budget which would saddle Halton ratepayers with an average \$35 increase in public school taxes.

The board's finance committee presented the proposed budget to the board Thursday. The revenue portion of the budget will be presented, and the vote held at the board's next meeting March 15.

The estimated \$35 increase is based on a five-mill increase for an average house assessment of \$7,000 finance committee chairman Rev. Gary Morton said.

CLERICAL WORKERS

The budget of \$93.5 million is an increase of about 8 per cent over the 1978 budget, with 74 per cent of the budget covering instruction. Instruction includes wages and salaries for teachers, clerical workers, and administrative people in the schools. Wages and salaries increased 7.45 per cent at the elementary school level and 8.04 per cent at the secondary school level.

For the first time, the board's budget will exceed the ceiling set on expenditures by the province at the secondary school level. The budget is below the ceiling at the secondary level. This ceiling is the

maximum limit set by the province at which the province will match with grants what the local school board spends.

The cost per pupil at both the elementary school and secondary school levels has increased by about \$170. The cost per pupil at the elementary school level is \$1,043 and at the secondary level, \$2,036. The cost at the secondary level is \$20 per pupil over the ceiling set by the Halton board.

The board is forecasting a decline in enrolment of almost three per cent at the elementary school level, which will affect the cost per pupil. Secondary school enrolment is expected to increase by .06 per cent.

It took members of the board finance committee three hours to make the formal budget presentation and answer questions from the trustees. Halton Hills trustee Barry Shepherd (Wards 3 and 4) expressed the frustration of the members of the committee, saying that they wanted to cut the budget as much as possible, but it had been very difficult. In the area of non-operating expenses, expenditures are down about 12 per cent, he said, but most of these expenditures are recoverable from the province, and so the taxpayers don't save any money.

Trustee John Bradley asked if the administration was considering any new methods to compensate for the fact that the Halton board is currently "top-heavy" in older, more experienced staff, who are paid a higher salary, than in younger, less experienced teachers. He suggested early retirement for those who might be interested in taking advantage of it.

Superintendent of instruction John Boich said the board is trying to hire as replacements younger teachers, those just out of the faculty of education, or with only a few years' experience, because it reduces salary costs and makes for a better age spread in the schools.

NO ADVANTAGE

"At the present we don't see an advantage, either in cost or in staff spread, to early staff retirement," he said. Director of education Em Lavender reminded the board that the proposed long-term plan will consider staffing as well as all other facets of the board's operation.

The addition of a gymnasium to Wrigglesworth Public School is in the budget for this year, as is a new floor in one of the gymnasiums at Georgetown high school.

ICG FUNDRAISER IS BLACKED OUT

Supporters of the Interested Citizens Group — opponents of the proposed hydro corridor through Halton Hills — had to hold their fundraising dinner by candlelight last Saturday night after a power failure blacked out the Holy Cross auditorium.

According to a spokesman for Georgetown's Ontario Hydro, power was lost in the auditorium when a connecting power line to the building heated up and caught fire. The wires were repaired later that evening but ICG supporters finished their meal without hydro.



HERALD COLLECTS AWARDS

Ontario Weekly Newspaper Association president Paul Scott (left) congratulates Herald editor Michael Hollett and sports editor Tony Panacel for winning two awards in the association's annual newspaper competition. The Herald was chosen second best newspaper overall in the OWNA's second highest category which includes newspapers

with circulations from 10,001 to 16,000. The Herald also received the award for the best sports section in their category. Editors Hollett and Panacel were on hand at the OWNA convention at the Hotel Toronto Friday to collect their awards.

(Herald special)