

Ward healing?

Town unveils capital budget four-year forecast

By PAUL DORSEY
Herald staff writer

Town councillors were tallying up the projects slated for their home wards last week before voting to approve Halton Hill's new \$9 million capital budget and four-year forecast.

Ward 3 Coun. Roy Booth concluded from his counting that Ward 4 stands to gain more from the budget and forecast, which were designed by a special committee of council chaired by Coun. Harry Levy of Ward 4 to guide the town's capital spending until 1984.

Coun. Booth was not satisfied with the reasons Coun. Levy cited for dropping the proposed reconstruction of half a dozen Ward 3 residential streets from the budget and forecast, but succeeded in having council direct town engineer Bob Austin to estimate the costs of applying a two-inch overlay to the streets.

Among those mentioned were Elgin, McNabb, Shelley, Keats and Byron Streets.

NEW BUDGET

Coun. Levy and his budget committee included debenture issues in the new budget and forecast for major projects which will see the town's per capita debt initially rise from \$36.82 to about \$44, but drop by 1983 to a low of \$34.03.

The budget and forecast anticipate a \$400,000 debenture for the planned theatre and library complex on Church Street in Georgetown and an \$83,400 debenture to cover the town's share of flood control work in the area of Glen Williams' paper mill dam.

In a covering letter, Coun. Levy called the capital forecast "a realistic programme which can be accomplished without placing an undue burden on taxpayers." In keeping with council's decision to avoid debenture issues as much as possible, he said, the bulk of the budget's and forecast's financing will be drawn from provincial government subsidies, the town's own operating budget and lot levies.

In its considerations, Coun. Levy added last week, the budget committee "took a closer look at the capital budget than ever before"

The policy of some citizens to "misinterpret" capital budget reports in the local press prompted Mayor Pete Pomeroy to stress that projects listed in the budget and forecast still require final approval. Spending priorities could change, he warned.

A \$410,000 allocation to the Main Street South reconstruction project in Acton dominates the town's transportation services budget for 1979 of \$1,263,650. Other areas listed for construction work are Acton's Lakeview subdivision, Georgetown's Maple Avenue, Bard Lane, River Road, Charles and Main Streets and Churchill Crescent and Esquesing's First Line.

New traffic signals will be installed at the Main-Mill and Guelph-Sinclair intersections in Georgetown, according to the budget at a cost of some \$98,000.

EROSION CONTROL

Erosion control work will cost the town \$76,600 during the balance of this year, with funds allocated to Metcalfe Court ravine work, channelization work in Concession 6 and Armstrong Avenue corrective work.

A \$10,000 allocation will see Georgetown's streetlighting system upgraded, while \$137,000 will be spent on two new engineering department vehicles for garbage collection and road sanding.

The purchase of two new ice resurfacers, the installation of lights at the Limehouse ball diamond and the construction of a creative playground make up this year's \$81,500 recreation and parks budget.

For the duration of the four-year capital forecast period, the recreation budget constitutes roughly one-quarter of the amount allocated to transportation services.

The \$1,181,000 recreation forecast for the year 1980 through 1983 includes \$400,000 for the theatre and library complex, \$70,000 for the establishment of a hardball diamond at Alcott Arena, another \$70,000 for the construction or upgrading of soccer pitches at Pineview, Stewarttown and St. Francis of Assisi schools and \$18,000 for renovations to the Norval Community Centre.

Continuing reconstruction work on Main Street South and Edward Street in Georgetown and Young Street in Stewarttown, the \$600,000 widening of Guelph Street in Ward 4 and more than \$484,000 worth of storm sewer work planned for Armstrong Avenue, Maple Avenue, the Lakeview subdivision and Norton and Stevens Crescents make up the bulk of the 1980 transportation services forecast.

TRAFFIC SIGNALS

Traffic signals worth \$40,000 are included in the 1981 forecast for installation at Guelph Street and Delrex Boulevard, along the reconstruction of Mill and Park Streets and Norton and Stevens Crescents in Georgetown and the Fourth Line in Ward 2.

The 1982 forecast provides for the installation of storm sewers on Dayfoot Drive and Morris and Mill Streets in

Georgetown and the reconstruction of Sinclair Avenue between Guelph Street and Duncan Drive in Dayfoot. Morris and Mill will be reconstructed during 1983 along with King Street between Queen and Sarah Streets and Victoria Street in Acton between Mill Street and Cobblehill Road.

Extensive park upgrading work planned for 1981 through 1983 drew Coun. Booth's attention when he discovered that much of the work is to be financed from the town's operating budget. He asked whether the "cash-in-lieu" fund to which local developers are required to contribute would not make a better source for recreation-oriented funds.

Clerk-administrator Ken Richardson and deputy treasurer Grant Usher pointed out, though, that until recently, provincial government legislation limits the use of the

cash-in-lieu fund to the purchase of property intended for recreational uses. Coun. Booth suggested the funding predicted in the forecast should be re-examined now that legislative amendments are allowing wider uses of development funds.

DIRE NEED

Coun. Booth said a number of Ward 3 residential streets are "in dire need of reconstruction or at least a two-inch overlay."

"It would appear, though, that some of the monies being expended in Ward 4 are in a much higher bracket," he commented. "Wouldn't it be possible to mete this out more evenly?"

Coun. Levy acknowledged the budget committee gave consideration to recent appeals by residents of some of the streets and to the pothole-ridden scenes viewed by coun-

cillors during a recent public works tour of the town. He cited the committee's intention to allocate funds for the Ward 3 projects in the town's operating budget, rather than its capital budget.

"We have all tried in turn to avoid being parochial, and we have all in turn failed miserably," Coun. Levy said. "We are making provisions for a two-inch overlay on some of the roads (Coun. Booth has mentioned, I would also point out that Ward 4 roads were left out of this year's operating budget, while lots of roads in Ward 3 were done.)"

Coun. Mike Armstrong somewhat facetiously complimented his Ward 4 colleague for doing "an excellent job" on the capital budget by ensuring that most of the Ward 4 projects are slated for 1980, an election year. Similarly, he joked, Ward 3 councillors who

had helped formulate the town's last capital budget had made sure their ward was amply represented in the 1978 budget in time for the last municipal election.

COMMITTEE MEMBER

Coun. Walter Biehn, another current budget committee member, informed Coun. Booth that Durham Street, one of the residential roads in question, is indeed slated for preliminary engineering and "possibly reconstruction in a couple of years."

Another Ward 3 street whose residents pleaded for reconstruction recently is nowhere to be found in the forecast, however, he said.

"Shelley Street was turned down badly," Coun. Biehn explained. "It's no use fooling the residents. It's not in any forecast for the next three or four years."

just prior to its entry into regional government, the former town of Georgetown's council had cashed in extensive roadway funds by applying an asphalt overlay to many local roads in which most cases is still holding up well. He asked Mr. Austin to prepare a report on the probable costs of doing the same for all local streets in need of partial or temporary repair.

Coun. Booth also pointed out that a special committee of council of which he is a member is in the process of re-negotiating an agreement with the Halton Board of Education by which the board and town will continue to use each other's facilities in Halton Hills.

"This may have a great deal of bearing on our expenditures for these shared facilities in the 1980 forecast," he said. "We might be saving a hell of a lot of money in 1980."



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NEW BILLIARD HALL

Acton has a new billiard hall now that town council and other authorities have granted the necessary permission. David Black is opening the doors of 11 Main Street North to pool and billiards enthusiasts and, as Coun. Ed Wood commented, "is offering an alternative to kids in the area."

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