

Billing system main concern at municipal drop-in centre

By RICHARD PETRASHEK
Herald Staff Writer

The Acton municipal drop-in centre, opened in the Community Services Centre November 23 to give Actonians easy access to their local council-

ors, has been very successful in its first three months of operation, according to Ward 1 Coun. Terry Grubbe.

Coun. Grubbe, co-ordinator of the services centre and the main motivating force behind

the drop-in centre, told The Herald she is pleased with the way the public has responded to the Friday afternoon drop-ins, which run from 1 to 3 p.m. "We've gotten a wide variety of questions from the people who've dropped in to see us."

Coun. Grubbe said. In recent weeks, however, most of the concerns have been about the new sewer rate system, she said.

"A lot of people found the new billing system hard to understand," she noted. "The literature explaining the new system which accompanied the first bills was based on monthly payments - whereas people in Acton are accustomed to paying every two months."

One of the keys to the present and future success of the drop-in, according to Coun. Grubbe, is the continuing, active participation of other council members.

MEET MAYOR
"The mayor (Pete Pomeroy) has been here for most of the Friday sessions and the people in Acton really like having the opportunity to speak to him directly," Coun. Grubbe explained. "Coun. Iuss Miller from Ward 2 has also shown up for some of the sessions."

One unexpected benefit of the Friday drop-in, according to Coun. Grubbe, has been the opportunity which it provides for all three Ward 1 councillors to be together, something which rarely occurs outside council meetings.

Coun. Grubbe said this affords councillors an opportunity to discuss matters on upcoming council agendas that might need clarifying.

"It's a great help to me personally, since I haven't been on council very long and I'm still in the learning process," she explained.

The Friday sessions also give Acton councillors an opportunity to discuss the calls they've had during the week from area residents.

"Before, we'd all quite often get the same calls from people about the same problems and individually contact staff at the town," she explained. "Now we have an opportunity to discuss the calls that we get during the week and act together on them."



SALTY SIDEWALKS

Virg Da Sousa of the town's works crew hit the streets Friday with salt in hand to clear off some of the slippery ice left by freezing rain. Mr. Da Sousa was spotted making the sidewalks of downtown Acton safe for pedestrians.

(Guelph Mercury photo)

Economic plan 'ambiguous', Bird complains

A draft economic strategy prepared by Halton Region's business development department is being forwarded to area municipalities for review, but the prospects of its adoption by the region have been severely damaged by a scathing attack from Burlington Mayor Holey Bird.

Bill Marshall, director of business development for the region, presented the draft plan, intended to guide the region's industrial strategy between 1980 and 1986, at last week's administration and finance committee meeting.

Immediately following Mr. Marshall's presentation, Mayor Bird launched into a prepared 20-minute assault on the findings of the report and its preparation.

"If I were a consultant," he said, "I would not want my name on this report."

The staging strategy is part of the economic policy of Halton Region, as adopted September 6, 1978.

Last April 4, the business development department was authorized to prepare the economic staging plan in conjunction with area municipalities.

According to Mayor Bird, "parts of the report are written in ambiguous terms and lack relevant detail and proper rationale."

"Pages B-1 to B-3 (of the report) are examples of the negative comments that have periodically come out of the region's business development department," he noted.

A recommendation had been made to have committee approve the study in principle, but Mayor Bird had it amended to simply read "that the Halton Region Draft Economic Strategy be forwarded to the area municipalities for their review and comment; and that

area municipalities be requested to return their comments within a 60-day period."

Following Mayor Bird's comments, committee chairman Mac Anderson offered Mr. Marshall time to respond. Mr. Marshall declined to comment, however, saying he preferred to wait until all comments have been received from the area municipalities.

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