

Residents oppose Bell Tower

The worst that could happen with a proposed 180-foot Bell communications tower in Hornby is that it would fall across a busy Regional road, according to a Bell spokesman.

"If it falls precisely south, it may cross Steeles Avenue," said Peter Linke, manager of Bell Cellular Network Provisioning.

Mr. Linke was speaking to town councillors at a Town of Halton Hills general committee meeting Monday night. Bell Cellular was asked by the town to consider alternate sites to a quarter of an acre of land north of Steeles Avenue and east of the Sixth Line.

But he said towers are unlikely to fall. If they do, they collapse on themselves, he said.

The Bell Cellular tower is proposed to complete a grid of "hand-off" zones linking cellular phone service along the Highway 401 corridor. Halton Hills and a site east in Peel, and a Milton site, are being considered as part of the cellular chain.

"Hand-off" is the term used to describe transmission as it changes from one tower to another

as a vehicle travels. Mr. Linke says the spot at Hornby is exactly what Bell needs to complete its pattern of hand-off points.

Bell met with Halton Hills councillors Monday to discuss the proposed tower in Hornby. At that time, Mayor Russ Miller requested the company consider other locations.

Mr. Linke said he thought Monday's meeting would be to resolve any landscaping demands the town had for a property he thought was approved.

"You come back (to town councillors) and say this is the site you've picked and this is the one you want," said Mayor Miller. He asked if Bell Cellular had considered the Hornby Ball Park.

Mr. Linke replied that it was "outside the search area." He said the only alternative to the Hornby site would be to locate the tower further west on the same parcel of land. Otherwise, "the coverage on the 401 may suffer slightly," he said.

Mr. Linke added that to purchase other parcels of land in the area would be too expensive.

"Aw, come on. Give us a break,"

said John Zajac, speaking from the audience. The crowd grew louder in the town chamber after Mayor Miller suggested Bell Cellular meet with local Hornby residents to discuss their preferences for a tower location.

"Why don't you talk to us, as the mayor said?" asked Mr. Zajac, who lives across the road from the proposed tower site.

Complaints from councillors regarding the Hornby Bell location included distraction from the flashing red light of a communications tower, and spoilage of the terrain of a largely rural area.

Councillor Joe Hewitt said Bell Cellular has made a "vague attempt" at finding alternative locations.

"As to the locating in the Bell Canada site, and your reference to the flashing light on Steeles (Avenue) I don't see how that would make a big difference," said Mr. Linke.

"I take a little bit of an exception to the 'vague attempt' (remark)," he said.

"We want to maintain good relations with everyone we deal with."

But Mayor Russ Miller directed Mr. Linke and Bell Cellular back to the residents to hold a public meeting, a request Mr. Linke said was "unusual." He added that politicians usually represent their constituents without public meetings to make decisions.

"I'm not prepared to make a decision that is contrary to the people I represent," said Mayor Miller.

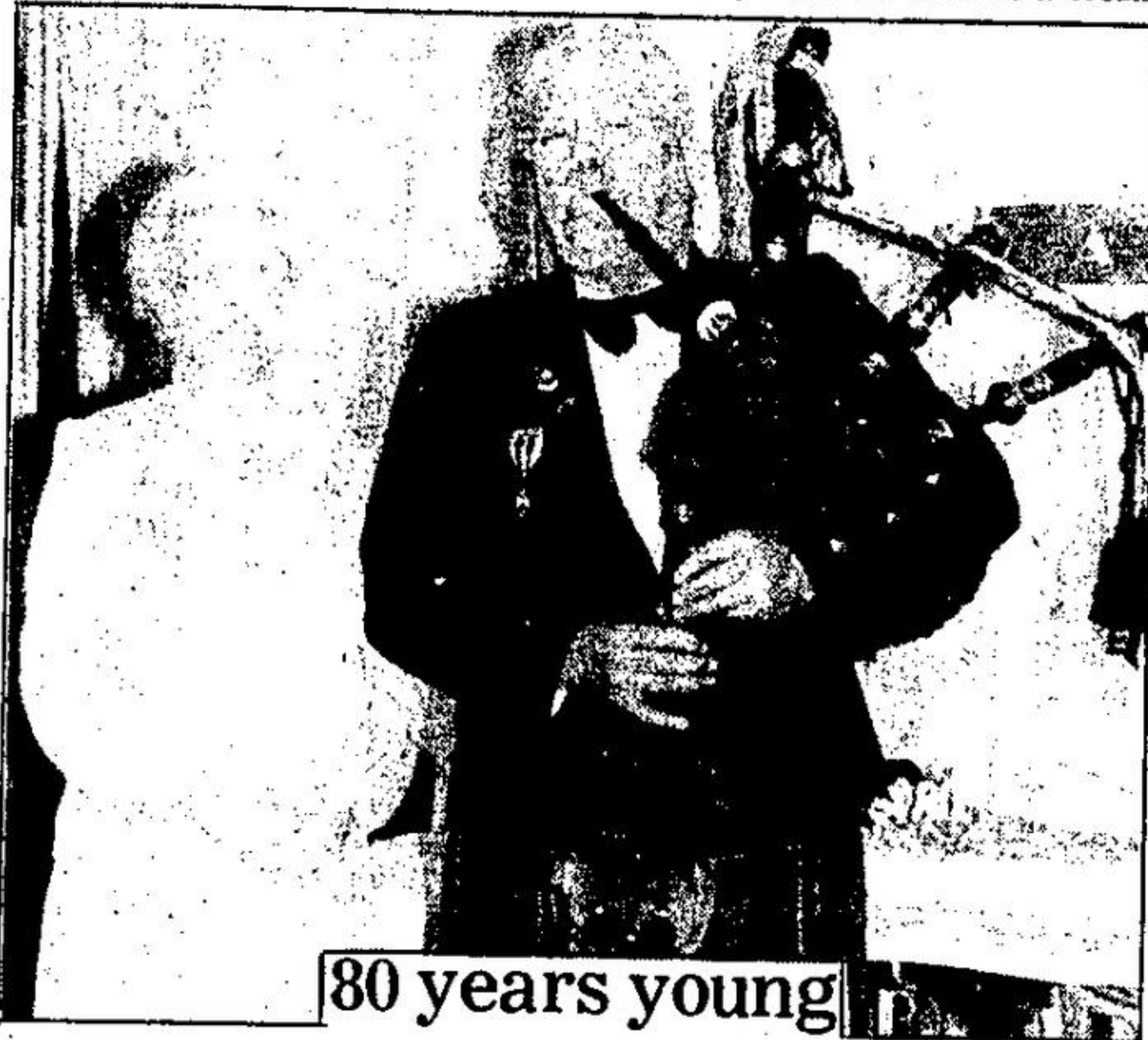
Town councillors voted in favor of the mayor's recommendation to hold a public meeting with Hornby residents, who live near the proposed tower site.

At Mr. Linke's request, there will be several local councillors present at a meeting to be arranged by the town.



CWL week

Catholic Women's League Week will be declared from April 23 to 29 as Mayor Russ Miller signs the proclamation. Members of the CWL committee include Trudy Klein, President Noreen Melhm, second vice president Theresa Smith, and secretary Jeanne Chandler. Their main project each year is a Christmas bazaar with proceeds going towards such organizations as North Halton Distress Centre, Meals-on-Wheels, Literary Guild, Open Door Youth Centre, and many others. General meetings are held every third Tuesday of each month.



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