

**For building code violations**

# Town inspectors can now issue tickets

The Halton Hills building department now has one more "tool" to better enforce the town's building code and various other related regulations, says building code enforcement officer John Holmes.

The province recently gave the town permission to issue fines at the time a building code violation is discovered. In the past, said Mr. Holmes, the town could only issue a summons ordering the offender to appear at a court hearing.

"It will save us considerable time," said Mr. Holmes.

Fines can range between \$53.75 to \$153.75. "We'll only use the tickets for the small guys but we'll continue to take the big offenders to court," he said.

Mr. Holmes also warned building code violators to expect significantly heavier fines to be issued as early as this summer. That's when the province is ex-

pected to pass legislation, said Mr. Holmes, in which the maximum building code related fines will increase from \$2,000 to \$10,000 for an individual and from \$10,000 to \$25,000 for corporations.

The current fines are too low, said Mr. Holmes. They are accepted as just another cost of doing business by builders, and the courts rarely handed out the maximum fine, he added.

But even this should change in

the future, he said. The courts are finding that building code violations are a serious problem and "it's no joke; human lives are being affected," Mr. Holmes said emphatically.

The \$53.75 type fines issued by a building code enforcement officer will be for such offences as failing to post a building permit or failing to have a building drawing on site, said Mr. Holmes. The \$153.75 type fines will be issued for such infractions as building without a permit, he said.

The building code offender can either pay the fine or contest it in

court. Mr. Holmes likened the options to those available to someone ticketed for speeding.

If a building code offender decides to contest the fine in court and loses the person could face a larger fine than the original, said Mr. Holmes.

The town will hold off issuing a fine if the offender corrects the problem immediately, Mr. Holmes said.

But as the public becomes more aware of the tickets, no leniency will be shown, he warned. The town has not yet been forced to employ the new fine system.

# Town needs parking spaces but they could be expensive

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and the Canadian National tracks in Acton.

In Georgetown, on average, 87 per cent of the available on-street parking on Main Street from Church Street to James Street and on Mill Street from Market Street to just east of Main Street is always occupied during the week. The average drops to 81 per cent on weekends, according to the report.

Employees of the downtown businesses take up 28 per cent of the available spaces, the highest of any group - which includes shoppers, people doing business and personal errands - during the week. On the weekends shoppers take up the most space representing 41 per cent of the total.

The busy off-street municipal parking lots are the Church Street lot and the lot behind the McGibbon hotel. The Church Street lot operates beyond its functional capacity during the morning and between 6 and 7 p.m. on weekdays. It is never full on the weekends, the report says.

The parking lot behind the McGibbon Hotel operates near capacity throughout the business day during the week. Only the Wesleyan lot operates well below full capacity during the weekdays.

In Acton parking on Mill Street from Main Street to John Street is continually full between 10 and 10:30 a.m. and 1 and 1:30 p.m., and 4:30 and 5:30 p.m. The Leather-town municipal lot is the busiest of the two Acton business core lots. It is full from 10 a.m. through to about 4 p.m. during the weekdays. The Willow Street lot behind Brother's Restaurant is only full from 10 a.m. to noon, according to the report.

Coun. Joe Hewitt asked Mr. McCann if it would be worthwhile for the meters on Main Street in Georgetown to be eliminated. Mr. McCann replied that the meters mean there is a hefty turnover rate of cars which business owners like. Eliminating or increasing the meter time would only reduce the number of shoppers in the

downtown core, he said.

As part of the report, Mr. McCann urged council to adopt a town staff proposed set of commercial parking standards. Although never adopted the staff has proposed, in 1986, a set of parking standards defining how many parking spaces should accompany a certain type of commercial development. Only with a set of parking standards will the town be able to provide suffi-

cient parking now and in the future, Mr. McCann told councillors.

The town's director of planning Ian Keith agreed, saying the proposal will be brought before council in the near future.

Without the standards in place the town cannot adopt a scheme to save money to finance additional parking, Mr. Keith told councillors.

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