

# Editorial

## The Halton Hills HERALD

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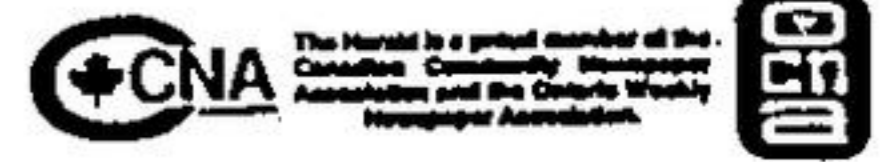
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### Realistic decision

Halton Regional Council's decision last Wednesday to put a two-year freeze on developers non-residential construction fees and increase, by only an insignificant amount, developers residential construction fees, will no doubt bring howls of protests from individuals and groups who feel that development throughout the region is out of control and that developers, and not elected representatives, are running local and regional governments.

Such is not the case.

Halton Regional Council simply viewed the issue through the harsh light of economic reality and proceeded with the decision - knowing full well it would be an unpopular one in some corners.

It was the right decision, at the right time - and not an easy one to make.

As noted by Herald reporter, Ben Dummett in his story in last weekend's Herald Outlook, Regional staff first proposed the development charge for non-residential construction increase from the current 85 cents per square foot rate to \$2.80 per square foot. The increase was based on projects that covered 25 per cent of a piece of property.

Area developers balked at this sizeable increase and similarly complained that a second Regional staff proposal for an increase in fees to \$2.38 per square foot was still out of line.

Developers are charged fees to help cover costs of roads and sewage lines etc. that need to accompany new development projects.

Regional staff then recommended, and received approval from Regional Council, to put a freeze on non-residential development charges for two years.

As Mr. Dummett reported, "At that time (after two years) the council of the day would reconsider if an increase would be necessary."

Not all councillors were pleased about the situation, including Kevin Flynn of Burlington, who felt the issue hadn't been publicized enough to allow the public more input into the final decision.

A public meeting has been scheduled for April 2, 9:30 a.m. at the Regional Administration building in Oakville at which time developers and members of the public will be asked to comment on whether development charges should be increased and by how much, in future years.

The fact still remains, communities need development to survive - albeit, at a controlled rate.

Developers provide money for a community's treasury in a number of related ways.

Through construction fees; through employment opportunities with money filtering through the community; through companies re-locating because of industrial sites and finally, but perhaps of most importance, development attracts people to the community, widening the tax base.

In 1990 the Town of Halton Hills saw revenue from building permits drop from a budgeted-expectation of \$800,000 to approximately \$335,000.

Much the same is occurring across Canada, as the recession digs in deeper.

According to Statistics Canada, the value of building permits, covering everything from home renovations to supermarket construction, dropped drastically in December.

Even seasonally adjusted, the value of building permits dropped 15.6 per cent in December, to \$1.87 billion from \$2.21 billion realized in November.

This was the 12th consecutive month building permit values dropped, according to Statistics Canada.

Figures from municipalities across Canada showed a 15.4 per cent drop in the value of residential permits to \$891 million in December from \$1.05 billion in November, while non-residential building permit values fell 15.8 per cent to \$975 million from \$1.16 billion in November.

Obviously, adjustments have to be made and, to a certain extent, because of loss of revenue, developers concerns must be addressed.

Different economic times require operating under a different set of rules and Halton Regional Council adjusted accordingly.

Reality dictated the decision concerning developers fees and the decision - although controversial, should be viewed as such.

### Write us a letter!

The Herald wants to hear from you. If you have an opinion you want to express or a comment to make, send us a letter or drop by the office. Our address is 45 Guelph Street, Georgetown, Ontario L7G 3Z6.

All letters must be signed. Please include your address and telephone number for verification.

The Herald reserves the right to edit letters due to space limitations.



## People's Forum Civil servants belligerent

Dear Editor:  
In the aftermath of the federal budget, I was most upset with the belligerent attitude of the civil service. In a country heading for depression, with thousands unemployed, the list of bankruptcies and plant closings swelling daily, we have a group of people who have the best of working conditions, pay and side benefits, complaining about a three per cent ceiling on wages.  
The managerial civil service staff, more than the politicians, is responsible for the featherbedding and unreasonable costs and delays encountered dealing with the government.  
If our politicians do not have the intestinal fortitude to straighten out our civil servants

at all levels of government, then straight economics will, eventually.  
With Ontario taxes roughly sixty per cent higher than those in the United States, there is little hope of industry creating more jobs.  
If Quebec wishes to ecede from Canada, financially it would be the best thing that could happen. We could almost eliminate the federal civil service. About \$100,000,000.00 of Ontario's budget, directly or indirectly, is spent promoting French. That could be eliminated, also.  
Nobody needs more than

\$60,000 a year to live comfortably. Especially people who do not have to provide for their retirement.  
Why not start addressing our economic problems now. For all civil servants earning over \$60,000 a year, let's cut their excess by 50%. For those earning between \$50,000 and \$60,000 a year have a 25% cut. For those earning between \$40,000 and \$50,000, have a 10% cut. If anyone doesn't like it, they could always resign and find out what it is like to make a living in the real world.  
R.D. Pinkney,  
R.R.3, Georgetown.

### Perky says thanks

Dear Sir:  
For the many years I spent in minor hockey and in baseball, I was specially honored by the people in Georgetown, and Hockey Heritage.  
I would like to thank all who honored me, minor hockey, government, midget hockey team, Walter Bianci, Town of Georgetown, Softball Ontario, Tricounty Minor Hockey, National Hockey League and Bryan Lewis. This was the greatest thing in my hockey life.  
Many thanks,  
Gerald "Perky" Perkins  
RIC Georgetown  
Referees Assoc.

### Governments squander peoples' money

Dear Editor:  
Your front page article on the March 1st issue called The Joke is on us does not surprise me. The handling of money by all levels of government leaves a lot to be desired.  
Probably the worst crime one can commit - worse than murder, is non-payment of tax. On the other hand governments feel that they can spend money for the purpose of increasing their own comfort and power, with no idea what the taxes do to a lot of the population. How can they - they have so many goodies for themselves.  
When I was a young man my parents used to say 'Look after

the pennies (cents) and the pounds (dollars) will look after themselves. This still holds true. Makes cents to me. Pity our politicians do not understand this simple fact. Hell, Mr. Wilson can not even deposit \$1,200 into the bank to reduce debt, so there really is not much hope. I suppose that \$1,200 is such a small amount of money that it really does not matter - it would not pay for one days expenses, wages, etc. of most MPs.  
Libertarians believe that the attitude to money in government has to change.  
John Shadbolt,  
Libertarian Party,  
Acton, Ont.