

Wednesday, July 17, 1991

Local downtown future depends on unique thinking

In contemplating how Georgetown should be developed, people may want to consider the question, where should the downtown core of Georgetown be located?

The answer most people would probably give is the area located in and around Main Street more commonly known as the Georgetown Central Business Area. While this response may be true today, and that's questionable, it certainly won't be the answer at the end of the decade.

In a recent column on the issue of housing identification, I wrote the preservation of Georgetown's downtown area depends on a greater number of people living within walking and cycling distance of the location.

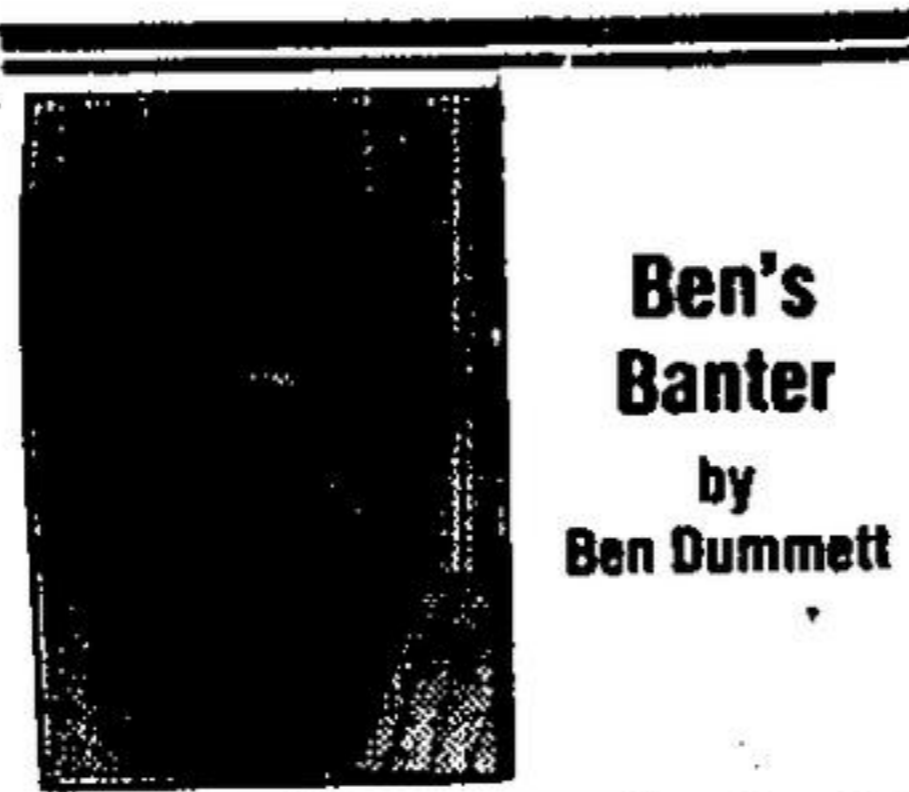
In response, Gail Rutherford, President of a local ratepayers

group, Residents Active in Development Decisions (RAIDD), wrote a letter to the Herald saying residential development of the Dominion Seed House lands on Guelph Street would go a long way to providing an additional source of people needed for the downtown area to establish a strong identity as a commercial hub for Georgetown.

I can't say for certain, but I believe, Ms. Rutherford's prediction is supported by many in the community.

However, there is one problem with this prediction. Those behind the Dominion Seed House support the idea of their lands someday in the future becoming the residential and commercial centre for Georgetown.

In a recent article in the



Ben's Banter
by
Ben Dummett

Herald, Dominion Seed House Vice-President David Krause is quoted as saying, "It might not happen in my lifetime, but it will happen someday."

He based his assessment of the company's future on the number of acres the company owns - 64, stretching between Maple

Avenue and Mountainview Road on Guelph Street - and the strategy for development of the lands.

There will be no strip development, said Mr. Krause. Instead, it will most probably be planned community with both residential and commercial projects, he hinted. The idea being, people will be able to live, shop and maybe work in the same area.

The development of these lands isn't the only competition Georgetown's downtown area faces. The Georgetown Market Place is currently undergoing a massive renovation that when completed will be an indoor mall not only comprised of a variety of stores, but also an additional large-scale department store. Zellers is already located in the plaza and once the renovation

project is completed, there will be a Woolco store.

As well, local construction company, McNally Construction, has applied to the Town to build a commercial complex just up the road from the plaza on Guelph Street. Finally, Georgetown-based developer Ricciuto has received Town approval to build a commercial plaza on Guelph Street next to the Georgetown-Norval border.

The development planned for Guelph Street should send a clear message to those living and working in the downtown core - unless they take the initiative and do things to give the area a more distinctive character it will only be a matter of time before the location will only be recognized as nothing but the past centre of Georgetown.

Political Forum

Ottawa Report

Ottawa to soon outlaw government spending

There are not many victories in this business of politics. But there are a few - and when they come, they feel good.

I'm not talking about winning elections, but rather about changing minds. This past week when the Minister of Finance stood up and announced it will soon be against the law for Ottawa to overspend, that felt like a victory.

For almost three years I have been asking the federal government, on your behalf, to get its financial house in order faster. Two specific recommendations came out of virtually every Town Hall meeting I held in this community. The same two showed up in the report of the Halton-Peel tax committee. And they've been repeated to me by worried business people and hard-pressed taxpayers.

You've told me that if we have to endure the GST, then the money it raises should go to pay

down the deficit, and not finance new government programs.

And you've also said you want some real, guaranteed limits on government spending. Taxes can go no higher - so paying our debt will have to come through less spending.

That has been the message to Ottawa from Burlington, Georgetown, Acton, Caledon, Bolton and points inbetween. And these have been goals I personally pursued, especially since stepping down as House of Commons committee chairman last year. I did not want to be an MP to have a title - instead I wanted this job to accomplish what I couldn't do as a newspaper columnist and critic. I wanted results.

So, many of us lobbied Michael Wilson hard to put the GST against the deficit, because until the deficit falls sharply, there's no hope for tax relief. Finally, he agreed - and in last February's budget made the announcement.



Garth Turner
MP
Halton-Peel
Progressive Conservative

Just a few weeks ago legislation to set up a GST bank account for the deficit was passed.

And now, the new finance minister, Don Mazankowski, has come through the legislation which - for the first time ever - will limit the ability of the government to spend.

This was a key recommendation in a report on taxes which I submitted to the minister last

January, after warning him that policies must change or Canada risks a tax revolt.

A three per cent cap is being placed on federal spending for the next five years. In other words, it will be against the law for Ottawa to exceed that. And if money is needed for some program, it will automatically require cuts someplace else. And because three per cent is below the inflation rate, it means real government spending is going to fall each year.

While this is not the zero per cent cap that I asked for, it's still quiet an event. Compare this three per cent ceiling with the 14 per cent one-year jump in spending just announced by the province of Ontario. If Queen's Park had the same law the feds have just announced, then maybe Ontario taxpayers could have been spared the \$1 billion in new taxes just handed them.

The only guarantee we have of

keeping taxes down is for governments to keep spending down. It's just that simple. Governments that overspend, or spend more on programs than they take in as taxes are tax timebombs. These days people are asking for less government, not more - and they continue to question why it is Canada needs so many levels of government and so many politicians.

Maybe Ottawa will take up another of my recommendations: Reform Canada, so we have five regions replacing ten provinces - and get rid of five governments off the bat. We'd have stronger economic units and less need for one area to subsidize another. We might also be able to appease Quebec that way. And we'd be rid of some of the 19th Century institutions we no longer need.

While we're at it, let's fire the Senate.

C'mon, prime minister. Make my day!

Despite promises the military has faced numerous cutbacks

OTTAWA - The promise four years ago in a long-awaited white paper on defence policy was clear and unconditional.

The country was told its long-neglected armed forces would be rejuvenated, rebuilt and expanded, given a new sense of direction and an honest commitment from government.

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney boasted the forces would have "a pride borne of noble purpose." Defence minister Perrin Beatty promised a force for the 21st century.

But the commitment soon dissolved in the fiscal morass, and the government's dithering, indecision and cutbacks since delivery of the policy document has infuriated many present and former defence chiefs.

Just how angry they are became apparent in late April when the rancor burst into public view with the sudden resignation of the vice-chief of defence staff, Vice-Admiral Charles Thomas said he couldn't accept a new long-range plan of unacceptable and unaffordable priorities.

A changing budget left him more than \$10 billion short, he said later.

Stirred

But even before the vice-admiral's resignation, hints of further spending cuts and uneasiness at headquarters also stirred an outspoken community of experts once employed by the armed forces.

Almost a year before the Gulf War, the Ottawa-based Defence Association National Network sensed the country's defence-related responsibilities were being compromised by spending

restraints. The association cautioned against cutbacks. It recognized the diminished risk of global nuclear war, but foresaw a need to contain regional conflicts.

Military strength has a large role in international affairs and if Canada cannot meet its commitments, its credibility will be diminished, the association maintained.

"There is no free lunch," it declared. "We (Canada) want to adopt positions of principle on affairs in South America, China, South Africa. We want to support NATO. But we are not sure we want to pay the price."

In early May, the association urged Mulroney to provide the Defence Department with clear guidance and adequate funding.

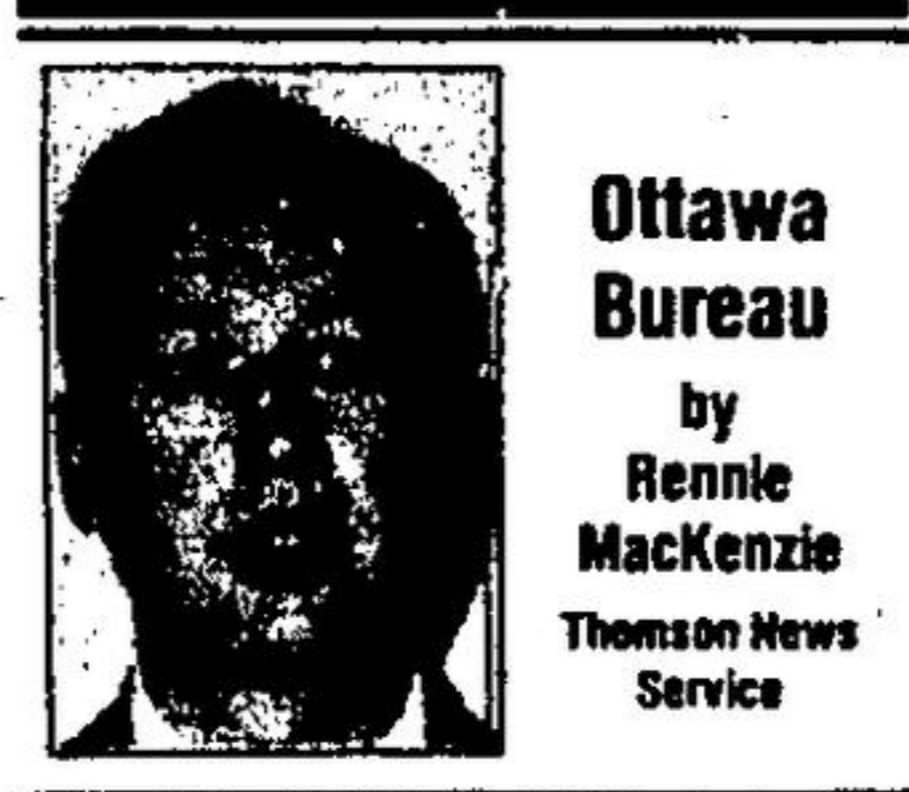
If anything there is an increasing, not decreasing, likelihood the military will be called into more peacekeeping and peacemaking situations at home and abroad, the non-profit organization predicted.

Ten days later, Defence Minister Marcel Masse chopped 1,000 jobs at defence headquarters and cut capital spending by almost \$500 million.

One who is convinced the government is moving in the wrong direction is prominent association director C.R. "Buzz" Nixon, a former navy commander and deputy minister of national defence from 1975 to 1982.

Nixon says he was astounded by the government's 1987 white paper on defence. His years of crunching numbers at headquarters told him the lavish spending plan was unaffordable.

Only two per cent of the gross



Ottawa Bureau
by
Rennie MacKenzie
Thomson News Service

national product has been committed to defence spending, putting the country "out of step with the rest of the world," he argues.

A more appropriate level would be four per cent, which is what many of our allies are spending, he suggests.

And to maintain a modern force, 30 per cent of the departmental budget must be allotted to equipment, Nixon says. He recalls his early days as deputy minister when the department "just barely survived" with eight per cent of its budget going to acquisitions.

Falling

Over time, the capital allocation was gradually increased to 27 per cent, but when the Progressive Conservatives won power in 1984, the figure began to slip, Nixon says. The department's current capital envelope of \$2.7 billion is just over 21 per cent of the total budget.

Nixon says the funding can be restored within the present budget cap, but his prescription calls for strong medicine - a regular force reduction of up to 15,000 and a 10-per-cent cut in

operations and maintenance.

"You have to close bases and cut the number of people."

But first, the government should provide the department with a clear policy direction, Nixon says. The Soviet threat has not disappeared, as many would seem to believe, and instability in a number of Soviet republics is worrisome, he says. And Canada must be prepared to contribute to future gulf-type crises, he adds.

Nixon believes Canada should focus its attention on a stronger United Nations organization and build defence forces that would be adequate to help maintain an

orderly, stable world.

He sees the day the UN will have established procedures for calling up an international force on short notice to support its resolutions. He believes leading democracies, including Canada, should support that process and be prepared to contribute forces whenever required.

"If we are to be among the most advanced countries of the world and have a sense of responsibility for stability in the world, we better be prepared to be there," he says.

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