

Poor local councillor turnout at 'Community talks' meeting angers local resident

By LISA BOONSTOPPEL-POT
The Herald

Despite concerns over Halton Hills' economic prosperity being raised during the recent election campaign, and the fact there was no council meeting Dec. 9, only one councillor attended Monday night's 'Community Talks' on Canada's prosperity.

Ward 2 Town councillor Rob Heaton was the only representative from Halton Hills Council to provide his input on how Canada might improve its economic situation.

And the poor councillor turnout has left one long-time Georgetown resident very disappointed in other councillors' apparent lack of concern.

"What is happening to our country should be as much of a concern to councillors as anyone else," said the resident who's lived in Georgetown for over 30 years and was appalled at the lack of councillor interest.

"I feel they should have been there," she said. "Part of their job is to be concerned about the country and they represent the people."

The women requested not to have her name printed.

She said the new councillors especially, have no excuse.

"They're new and need to get input on the community's feelings about issues and that's all the more reason they should have attended the talks," she added.

The 'Community Talks' are being held across Canada as part of a federal initiative to seek advice from communities in planning for Canada's prosperity.

Ideas presented by people at the meeting were recorded by government employees and will be included in a report to be released this fall.

At the Halton Hills' Community Talk, comments were received from over 30 residents and businessmen.

On the poor turnout of councillors, Coun. Heaton commented that he was surprised.

"The fact that they didn't show up takes away from their election platforms," he said. "During the election they were pushing for economic development for the town."

He said councillors could have brought insight and ideas to the meeting that non-political citizens wouldn't be aware of. For that reason, they're attendance would have been beneficial to the talks.

"Often councillors hear more from businessmen and residents on a one-to-one basis than anyone else, so they could have brought these comments to the meeting on behalf of the town," he said.

He also explained that since most councillors belong to provincial or Canadian-wide organizations for municipal councillors, they could have a more global perspective on issues than other people.

Of the councillors that the Herald contacted Wednesday, most either admitted they didn't even know about the 'Community Talks' meeting, or forgot to go to it.

Councillors Bill Robson, Ron Chatten, Gail Rutherford, and Anne Currie all denied having any knowledge about the meeting.

Councillors Kathy Gastle said she knew it was being held but said, "I forgot about it."

Coun. Rick Bonnette said, it "slipped my mind," while Coun. Al Cook said he had to work late that night.

Coun. Norm Elliott admitted he knew about the meeting, but wasn't able to go, and even if he had been, he had no intention of going

because, "I didn't want to go to a bitch session and listen to people unload on the government. I'm tired of going to these meetings and hearing nothing but negative criticism of the government."

The other councillors couldn't be reached for comment.

According to David Wright, Executive Director for the Halton and Peel Industries Training Advisory Committee (HAPITAC), the meeting was constructive and enjoyed by those in attendance.

"People at the meeting felt it was a good process," he said.

HAPITAC co-sponsored the meeting along with the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce.

Chamber General Manager, Doug Penrice, said he was disappointed with the turnout overall, but not surprised by the lack of members of the public or councillors in attendance.

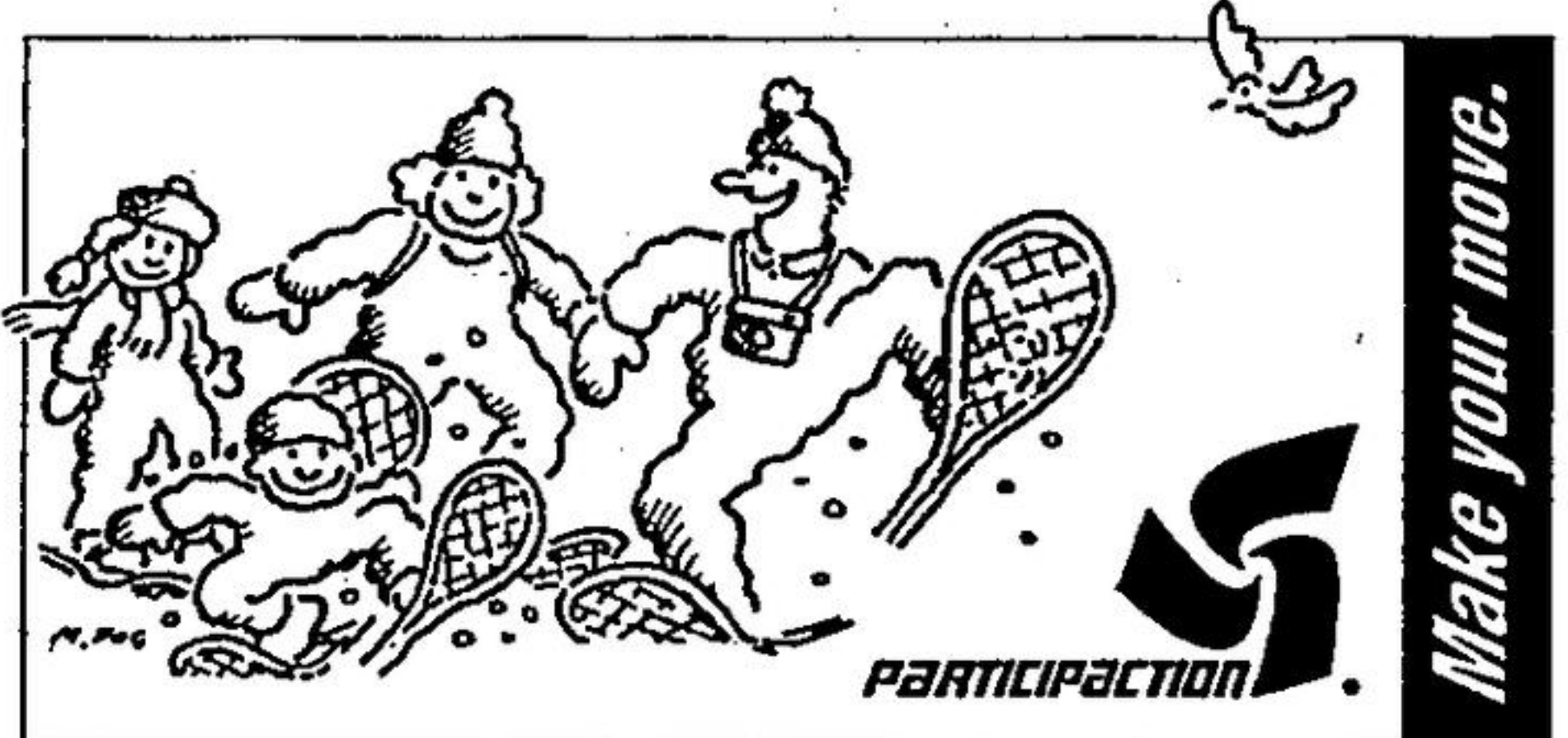


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Police lay charge against local babysitter

A Norval woman, who has advertised her services as a babysitter in local newspapers and looked after other people's children, has been charged with inflicting abuse.

Audrey Lee, 30, is being monitored by the Halton Children's Aid Society after a Georgetown mother reported to police her son has been abused while the woman was taking care of him.

The Georgetown mother alleges that on three separate occasions, her young son had facial injuries ranging from a cut lip and swollen eyes and cheek to severe bruising.

When her son allegedly sustained facial bruising the third time in the woman's care, the mother discon-

tinued using the babysitter's service and reported the incidences to police.

Police say another woman, who's eldest child was in care of the Norval babysitter, allegedly found linear welts on her child's back on several different occasions.

A police investigation is ongoing.

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