

Council takes paring knife to several budget items

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budget and \$105,000 from the technology reserve.

Chopped were:

- \$25,000 in library materials—about 1,200 items, primarily for the new Acton Library.

“This is an addition,” said Bonnette, adding, “We can’t build Rome in a day.”

But Wards 3&4 Regional Councillor Jane Fogal opposed the cut, saying “we’re going to have to buy those books sooner or later...We know the difference in size between the two libraries, and it’s pretty pathetic to have this new library with empty shelves.”

- \$21,000 to hire two students to keep Prospect Park clean of goose droppings and other maintenance duties over the summer.

“I have full confidence the new Superior Glove Splash Pad will still be clean like it was last year... as much

as it annoys me to see the goose droppings, it’s (the hirings) still impacting the taxes,” said Bonnette.

- \$5,000 for election expenses. This amount will have to be made up in future years.

- \$9,000 for maintenance fees for a recreation membership software program (\$45,000 will remain in the Technology Reserve). “I think we can do without this for a year,” said Bonnette.

- \$6,000 for maintenance fees for an Amanda Public Web Portal program (\$60,000 will remain in the Technology Reserve). “(Town Treasurer Ed DeSousa) indicated that we probably wouldn’t get to this project this year,” said Bonnette.

These cuts reduced the budget to a 6.3% increase, so Bonnette asked



RICK BONNETTE

councillors for other options worth \$5,000 to take it down to 6.2%, otherwise he would go with his final option—a further \$5,000 reduction of the Halton Hills Cultural Roundtable’s budget. In the preliminary budget two weeks ago, council had dropped the volunteer group’s budget from \$60,000 to \$40,000. The group has a management agreement with the Town

to help develop and assist the local cultural and heritage scene within Halton Hills.

But Fogal, an advocate for HHCR, suggested another \$22,000 in cuts to reinstate the \$20,000 lost.

Council accepted her cuts of \$5,000 for various project start-up costs, \$3,000 for snow maintenance on cycle paths on 17 Sideroad and Wallace St.

to be built this year, and \$14,000 for enhanced snow removal in some parks.

Fogal then attempted to reinstate the HHCR budget. Many groups have benefited from the HHCR’s leadership, including the Town which used HHCR’s services to write a grant proposal for the renovation and expansion of the Georgetown Library and Cultural Centre, added Fogal. The restoration of the budget would be a Town investment with an obvious payback, agreed Councillor Jon Hurst.

The vote to restore the HHCR budget lost. Voting for were Fogal, and Councillors Dave Kentner, Moya Johnson, Jon Hurst and Ann Lawlor. Voting against were Bonnette, and Councillors Clark Somerville, Joan Robson, Mike O’Leary, and Bob Inglis.

The budget numbers approved do not include the taxpayer-supported dedicated hospital expansion levy, should council approve that sometime later this month.



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