

Town to hire consultant to study Danby bridge issue

By **CYNTHIA GAMBLE**
Staff Writer

The Town of Halton Hills will hire a road consultant— at the cost of about \$17,000— to develop options to mitigate the impact of a proposed bridge leading to a new subdivision on Danby Rd. in Georgetown South.

Halton Hills council approved the expense after meeting with residents over the last several months.

The bridge connection is required as part of the new Fernbrook Homes Phase 3 development.

Last summer, residents had presented the Town with a 68-name petition protesting the building of the bridge over Sixteen Mile Creek, which would extend Danby Rd. to Eighth Line (Main St. S.).

Residents, represented by Danby Rd. resident Silvana Hollett at the council meeting, oppose the bridge because it will add traffic- and subsequently increase safety concerns for children-



The Town intends to extend Danby Rd. through to the Eighth Line via a bridge over a natural open space.

on Danby, near Gardiner Public School and Danby Rd. Park. The bridge would also bisect a natural area, which is home to a popular walking trail and wildlife, she said. She also said the additional traffic would impact homeowners' property values as well as create noise pollution.

Hollett told council the residents' first choice is to eliminate the bridge.

"But if that can't be done, then bring in a third party consultant to help in the design of the bridge that will consider things like the trail, agriculture and wildlife, to make it aesthetically pleasing, and to introduce extra traffic calming measures," Hollett said.

Ward 4 Councillor Bob Inglis, who has been working with the residents on this issue, noted that this is a very busy area for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicular traffic.

"Speeding cars and pedestrian safety are continuous concerns to residents in

that area, that ward and the town in general," said the longtime councillor. "And any measures to make this a safer environment for all, I would say should be fully considered."

Fire Chief Brent Marshall said the bridge is necessary to ensure a direct primary route for good response times for firefighting, and without the Danby Rd. extension, a study has shown it could double response times to the area. That could apply to police and ambulance as well, he said.

Marshall said without the connecting bridge, the Fire Department would have to reconsider the new subdivision's design.

Ward 1&2 Regional Councillor Clark Somerville asked Hollett if she was aware of the long-planned bridge when she

bought her home. Hollett replied she was, but had not expected it to be built so soon, at an age when her children were still young.

While Somerville supported the consultant's hiring, he cautioned council that the resulting recommendations could be too costly.

"We have to be realistic as to what we are embarking on," he said, pointing out that some people are requesting trail underpasses.

He added that Danby was designed and built to be a collector road from Mountainview to Eighth Line. And when it becomes that, he said, it would relieve the traffic that is now on the surrounding local roads.

Director of Planning John Linhardt said the bridge was part of Town plans since 2000.

Director of Infrastructure Services Chris Mills said the bridge would be built in concert with the Fernbrook construction, starting likely in the next year or so.

The consultant's report will be presented to area residents before it comes back to council for approval.

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