

Town Digest

Town's Farm tax deferral costs requested

Town councillors want to know exactly how much it costs the Town to operate its farm tax deferral program, which allows people who pay taxes on farmland to defer payment until the end of September, after the harvest.

A staff report said the 551 owners of farmland were surveyed to gauge opinion of the deferral program, and 52 per cent of the 60 per cent who responded want the program to continue while 48 per cent want it discontinued, or had no preference.

Staff said the Town's billing system does not allow automated processing of the farm tax bills, and it takes one staff member a week to process over 500 farm bills with a value of \$402,000. In comparison, it takes a week for a staffer to process over 19,000 tax

bills with a value of over \$90-million.

Staff recommended holding a public meeting on the issue for the farming community on February 21, but Regional/Acton Councillor Clark Somerville questioned why, with over half of respondents not in favour of continuing the program, they need a public meeting. Staff said support for the farm tax deferral program was not overwhelming, and it takes quite an amount of effort to run the program, leading Somerville to ask staff to report back with the cost of providing the program.

Paved highway shoulders

Halton Hills Council has thrown its support behind a Private Member's Bill to pave the shoulders

on highways to improve safety and to promote active transportation. The Bill would require a one-metre paved shoulder on certain provincially owned highways to improve safety for cyclists, pedestrians and motorists.

Georgetown Councillor Ann Lawlor championed support for the Bill, re-introduced by Muskoka MPP Norm Miller.

"With Highway 7 linking our communities together, I certainly would see that that might be one road that we would hope that the province would pave if this Private Member's Bill is approved," Lawlor said, adding safety has been improved by the Town that has already paved a one-metre wide stretch on 17 Side Road, west of Trafalgar Road.



BELLE OF THE BALL: Acton's Sydney Weaver, 11, received a prestigious Canadian Harness Racing O'Brien Award at a black tie soiree in Mississauga on the weekend. Her winning contest entry detailed how all of her good memories at race tracks are due to her father Don. - Submitted photo

Taste of the Chamber

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