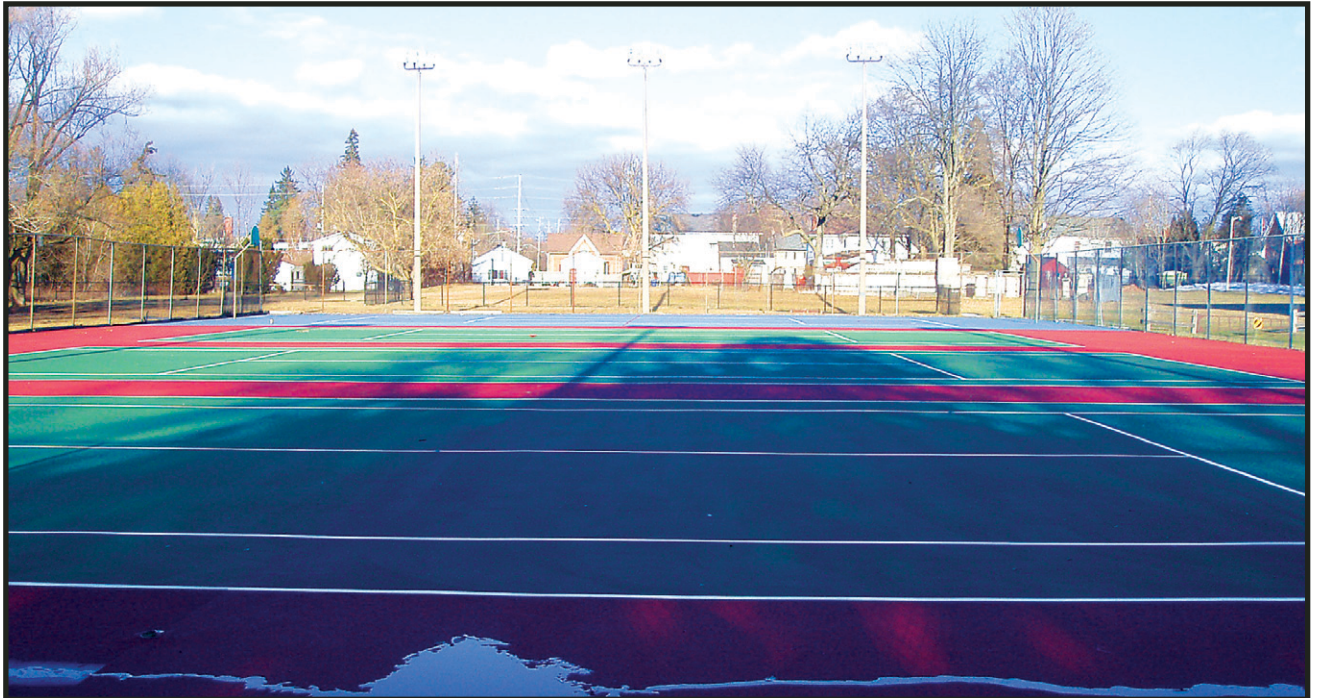


TENNIS, ANYONE? What a difference a week makes - no snow and balmy temperatures last week and more typical winter weather this week. - Eileen Dix photo





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Farm tax deferral saved

Tim Canedra, the only resident to speak at a public meeting last Tuesday about Town staff's proposal to scrap the farm tax deferral program asked Council to continue to allow him to pay his farm tax bill in September, after the harvest.

With a 60 per cent return rate, a recent survey of 551 property owners who pay taxes on farmland found that just over

half - 52 per cent - want the Town to continue the program, began six years ago. Town staff said the program is inefficient and with a "lack of overwhelming support" should be discontinued.

"This community was built on the farming community," Canedra said, repeating twice that farmers were "taking the brunt" of Town fiscal plans. Staff said the program costs the

Town \$4,000 to administer annually and its manual preparation is inefficient.

Ward Two Councillor Bryan Lewis supported the program and asked councillors to "see a value in helping our farming community in some way, shape or form." Both Lewis and Regional/Acton Councillor Clark Somerville asked staff to help better explain the program to affected property owners to

avoid problems.

Georgetown Councillor Moya Johnson asked staff to investigate requests from property owners to pay the farm part of the tax bill quarterly, or to join the pre-authorized monthly payment program. Mayor Rick Bonnette, who authored the farm tax deferral plan in 2006, called for the status quo to continue to help the farm community.

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