

# Development charges cut in half

**By STUART JOHNSTON**  
Regional councillors have listened to the cry of developers and cut in half proposed charges on construction projects in Halton.

At a final public meeting Tuesday morning, councillors tentatively approved the fee of \$1.10 per square foot, as required by the Provincial Development Charges Act, on all non-residential develop-

ment. The rate would be effective for two years, after which it will be revised.

Over the next few months, a committee is expected to be set up to revise the development charges when the current fee expires. Regional staff, developers, an elected representative and members of the public will be invited to participate on the committee.

The first 5,000 square feet of expansion or redevelopment will be exempt from the charge. Until now, Halton has charged a flat rate of \$9,815 per acre for new business development, but it maintains that doesn't cover the costs of providing services such as roads and utilities.

Regional Council is expected to approve the new rates during its regular meeting on April 17.

Halton Region originally proposed a \$2.80 charge per square foot, but later lowered the proposed rate to \$2.38 after dozens of written and verbal concerns were submitted by developers.

Councillors heard from developers, lawyers and other business people at a public meeting in February, and again Tuesday, that the current economic climate is not suitable to begin raising development costs. They maintained it would deter growth and redevelopment, which would therefore put more of a burden on Halton's economy.

Many threatened to close shop and move to other regions if the full charge was imposed on development.

Treasurer Joe Rinaldo defended the revised charge of \$1.10 by claiming it is an "acceptable balance" between "recovering costs while encouraging growth."

The new fee will recover only 39 per cent of the capital costs of new development, he added, which represents an estimated \$7 million loss in projected revenues over the next two years.

"It has to be recognized that what's before us is essentially paying lip service to the overall recommendation," Chairman Pete Pomeroy told councillors, in defense of the revised fees. "This is a really complex issue...In certain areas in the region a \$1.10 charge may have an impact on the ability to market land in that area, so we must consider that as we go along this road."

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## Renegade railway cars

Two Canadian National Railway cars broke through a rail end barrier and ran off the track in the Sinclair Ave. and Armstrong Ave. area last week. The accident was reported to police last Tuesday.

It is not known how the two cars became runaways on the spur line. Both cars were empty and both remained upright after derailing. No one was injured in the accident.

### Garbage fire

Firefighters responded to Harrison Public School in Georgetown Sunday morning after an outside garbage bin was set on fire. No damage was reported.

### Grass fire

Approximately half an acre of grass, along with a pile of cedar rails, were ignited late Wednesday morning near Speyside. The owner of the property had been burning brush when the fire spread, according to the Fire Department. No damage was reported.

## Police beat

The youths were originally caught by police, who seized 37 bottles of beer and one bottle of whisky, then took the youths home to their parents, said Detective Sergeant Mike Eacrett. At that time, police didn't know about the break-in, which was reported the following morning.

All five young offenders are from Georgetown and they will be appearing in court on May 3 in Milton.

Two of the offenders were also charged with a break and enter at M & R Book Exchange on Guelph St. which took place between March 22 and 23.

The young offenders turned over to police a number of stolen goods, including: \$210 cash, Led Zeplin tapes, hockey cards and plastic folders for the cards. Eacrett said that the material turned over to police was the majority of what was stolen.

These two youths will also be appearing in a Milton court on May 3 in connection with this theft.

### \$700 coin theft

A thief walked away with \$700 in change after breaking into a teacher's locker at Acton High School on Tuesday afternoon. The locker was in a supply room behind two locked doors in the physical education department. A total of \$200 of quarters and \$500 in dimes were stashed in a white pail. The theft took place between 4:15 and 4:30 p.m. There was no damage to the locker, and both doors were locked after the theft.

### Hit and run

A hit and run accident causing \$600 damage took place at 5:10 p.m. on Wednesday. A car partially lost control when it was making a left turn onto 15 Sideroad. The suspect is a white male with long dark hair. Anyone who has information which could lead to the arrest of the suspect, please call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-668-5151.

## More youths charged

Five youths who were found drinking behind Zellers on March 31 have now also been charged with break and enter and theft at Marty's Too Restaurant on Guelph St. the same evening.



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