



The weather was almost perfect for the 31st annual Milton Steam Era last weekend. Many Halton Hills residents were among those that trekked to Milton to see some of the old-fashioned machinery. Area resident Alex McLeod displays one of his 25 antique chainsaws. In the background is a 1907 Fairbanks engine belonging to neighbor Harry Fraser. **KEVIN POWELL Halton Hills WeekEnd**

Area residents to get input into future developments

By **STUART JOHNSTON**

Halton is gearing itself to be the first municipality in Ontario to involve the public at the beginning stages of all future development proposals, Regional councillors were told Wednesday.

Consultants from the firm Hemson Consortium presented council with their draft of the second phase for the Halton Urban Structure Review (HUSR), a plan for new urban growth outside of existing urban centres.

The bulk of future development of this kind will centre on Halton Hills south, near Hornby, and parts of Milton, according to the first phase of HUSR, completed in 1989.

While reviewing HUSR, consultant Ray Simpson noted the most significant change for Halton to make is to increase public consultation before significant decisions are made on development.

"We've heard a lot of criticism of the current process, where it is more informative rather than consultative," Simpson said. "There are continuous complaints that decisions are being made without involving the public, and that we

are not including environmental aspects early enough in the process.

"Now, we are considering all decisions to be made under the environmental assessment type of analysis, where we will be involving the public at each point before decisions are being made...Nobody's done it this way before—it is the first attempt of this kind in the province...We're confident this kind of approach is going to work."

Planning commissioner Rash Mohammed noted the Region has learned "from the Georgetown experience," where development proposals for the Silver Creek Valley were constantly altered due to residents' concerns.

"This is exactly what we are trying to avoid — going back and redoing everything once decisions have already been made," Mohammed said. "This is going to save us time, too — we'll know what to do right up front. We can re-cost before we do all the work."

Mohammed noted the Province has promised \$1.4 million to fund the second phase of the review, but some councillors were skeptical that the ministry will approve the

study's final results.

"Is the Province really on our side? Don't you think they are going to say we did it the wrong way, after we spend all this time and money?" Halton Hills rep Marilyn Serjeantson said.

Mohammed assured them that "the Province has said it's going to use Halton as a model — that's why they gave us the money."

Halton chairman Pete Pomeroy applauded the new direction, believing "if we don't try something new, nothing will ever be approved again in Ontario."

"With the Georgetown experience — we thought we covered all of the public's concerns, we consulted the public and then they came back with more questions," he added. "It's all changed now — the public has a lot more to say, and in my opinion this is worth a try. But, critical to this is the support we have to get from the Province...If we don't get it, then let's abandon this and revisit it another day."

Simpson added public meetings will be held on the HUSR in October, and newsletters will be sent to every home in the Region.



Halton Hills Optimists CHICKEN Club poster winners had a special treat Labor Day as they piled into a limo, donated by Starr Limousine, and motored off to the Skydome to watch a Jays game from the Bank of Montreal booth, with all the services. Poster contest winners included Christopher Armstrong and Kathryn Perdue of Holy Cross School, Christina Boteloh and Adam Szlachta of St. Francis, Joel Higgins of Park, Lor-

raine McKie of Glen Williams, Andrea Pollock and Ben Redman of George Kennedy, Mary- Beth Robertson of Robert Little, and Jennifer Schultz of M.Z. Bennett. Optimist president Sandy Booth, Optimist Doug Starrett, Allen Farmer, Chairman of the Optimist Poster Contest and Nancy Price of Starr Limousine were on hand with last but not least, the CHICKEN.

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