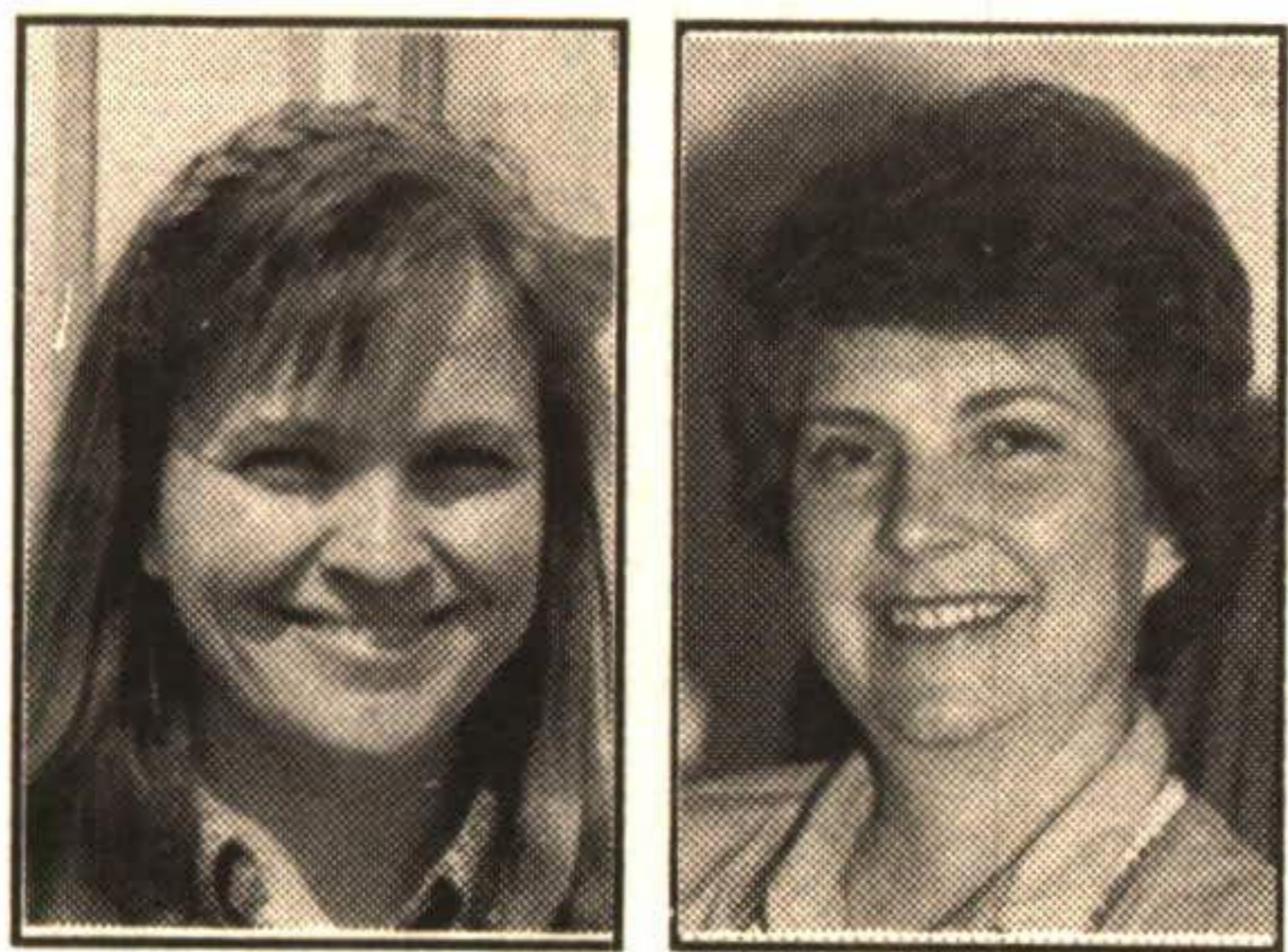


Local environmental groups feel war against landfill not over yet

A "major battle has been won," but the war against the Acton Quarry dump proposal isn't over yet, local environmental groups say. "We'll savor the fact that (RSI) didn't get it by us this time — they are definitely set back and delayed — but they aren't blown out of the water yet," an elated POWER president Barbara Halsall said.



DIANE VAN DE VALK BARBARA HALSALL

Stressing that she doesn't want to "take anything away" from what many consider to be a major victory over the landfill company, Halsall cautioned that people must still be prepared for whatever may come next.

"We'll have to wait to see what RSI is going to do next, but we still have to be ready for them," she said. "Chances are they will proceed with their plans. I mean, they aren't just going to roll over and die, even though that's what we want them to do. We're still in a war, but this is a battle that we've won. It's nice to know that. So, we're going to enjoy this feeling for

a little while yet."

FOAD's Diane van de Valk agreed, noting that "now is the time to become proactive" and develop "creative methods" that will hinder RSI from continuing with its plans.

"No one is really naive enough to believe RSI has gone away forever," she said. "That's why everything we do has to be for the future... We see this as a breathing space for the town and region to come up with ways to prohibit (RSI) from moving forward... The board's decision was an appropriate one... as it buys the

town and region a second chance to kill this proposal. That's the most important aspect of the decision."

Van de Valk praised FOAD's solicitor Doug Edwards on his initiatives during the entire process, claiming that his "fresh, creative approach" to the problem was instrumental in obtaining the final decision.

"What we're looking for is recognition that the town and region may not have selected the best strategy (initially), but once (Doug) Edwards was brought on board in the spring, they realized that there was room for improvement."

Town lawyer Steve D'Agostino said in an interview that everyone opposing RSI played a part in their ultimate "victory" this week.

"The problem with a hearing of this magnitude is we're dealing with a lot of people, so you can't really point to any one party as having significant influence," he admitted. "It was truly a group effort, and everyone worked hard at it."

Town seeking costs of RSI fight

Halton Hills officials are hoping to recover some, if not all, of the \$500,000 of taxpayer's money spent to date fighting the Acton Quarry dump proposal.

According to town administrator Dan Costea, the consolidated hearings board will be asked to award the municipality all costs that it has incurred since 1988.

Unsure of the exact figures, Costea said in an interview

Wednesday they are "looking at somewhere around \$400,000 to \$500,000."

"We're not sure we'll get all of it back, but our approach is to ask for full costs dating back to 1988," he added.

In its decision this week pronouncing that Reclamation Systems Inc. (RSI) has done an inadequate job preparing its proposal, the board indicated that it will be

awarding costs next month.

Under the intervenor funding project act, proponents such as RSI and those who would benefit financially from the project, are ultimately responsible for the costs of a hearing.

An independent panel reviews who was involved in the hearing, how much it cost them, and how much they should be reimbursed, if at all.

The town, Halton Region, groups like POWER and FOAD (Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources, Furiously Opposed to Acton Dumping) and others must submit their bills for the June hearing to the board before Oct. 7.

The maximum rates the board has reimbursed hearing participants' legal fees in the past are: \$165 for senior counsel; \$145 per hour intermediate counsel; and \$115 per hour for junior counsel.

However, town officials feel they should not only be reimbursed for costs incurred at the hearing, but all fees dating back to when RSI first made its proposal almost five years ago.

"A lot of money has been wasted here — half a million dollars of taxpayers' money blown and gone just because some bloody outfit like RSI wants to dump garbage here," a frustrated mayor Russ Miller exclaimed.

"We already have a (regional) landfill here — it's not necessary to have another one, (especially) in the Acton Quarry."

Duignan promises action

Halton north MPP Noel Duignan wants to "bury" the Acton Quarry dump proposal "once and for all."

Duignan said Wednesday he will now be pressuring environment minister Ruth Grier and Premier Bob Rae to "bring forward" his private member's bill prohibiting dump sites on the Niagara Escarpment, and make it an "immediate priority."

His bill, which received "first reading" at Queen's Park on June 10, will ban all waste disposal operations on the Escarpment that do not have a license by the time the new legislation comes into force. The bill will only become law if it is unanimously approved by the provincial members of parliament.

If successful, Duignan is confident that Reclamation Systems

Inc.'s plans to dump more than 20 million tonnes of garbage in the Acton site will be "buried once and for all."

During the preliminary hearings held in June, the lawyer for the ministries of environment and natural resources stated for the record that the province is opposed to RSI's plans. Duignan said he wants that position to be made official again, and promised to lobby Grier to make that statement herself.

"The minister has told me all along that she wanted to wait until the hearings are over before she makes any statements," he said. "Well, now the board has made its position clear. (Grier's) personal opinion is there will not be a dump site there (in the Acton Quarry). And, I'll be asking her to state that publicly."

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