

Council adopts plans outlining future development in Halton Hills

By LISA TALLYN
Staff writer

Halton Hills councillors have adopted studies that will set the tone for development in Acton and Georgetown over the next 20 years.

At a special council meeting Tuesday night, councillors endorsed, with a few amendments, the Acton Urban Residential Implementation and the Halton Hills Urban Area studies. By July, after a public meeting, the recommendations in the studies by Walker, Nott, Dragicevic Associates Ltd. Planning Consultants should become amendments to the town's official plan.

When the new official plan is complete it should be more "user friendly" for everyone than the current one. People (residents, would-be residents and developers) should be able to look at a map of Halton Hills and see clearly which areas are designated for what type of commercial, industrial or residential development.

"All areas of the community are being earmarked for something," said Deputy Planning director Bruce MacLean. "So people will have an idea of what to expect in the future. What this (official plan amendments) does is that we will now know where the high, medium and low density areas are, so people can buy accordingly."

Acton councillor Gerald Rennie says the studies and plan amendments are valuable.

"For Acton the developers will have an idea of the direction we are going in," said Rennie. "It is useful for people to know in advance."

Councillor Bill Robson agrees with Rennie, but adds the official plan must be adhered to in the future.

"It will be valuable if we put in

the amendments and the zoning bylaws to go along with them," said Robson. "We have to make sure that we don't go out and violate our official plan every time someone wants to make an amendment." He adds that has often been done in the past.

"Today zoning is all over the place. We have to get a balance for the town."

Councillor Anne Currie says the plan's amendments should be looked at as a guide.

"We have to remember that all those things (outlined in the studies) won't necessarily happen," said Currie. "It is a guide for us to place things at good locations."

Regarding Georgetown's commercial development, council at Tuesday's meeting recommended that the Dominion Gardens property be designated for mixed use development that may feature 230,000 square feet of retail commercial floor space, multiple family residential uses, parkland, and community facilities.

Councillors said they wanted the official plan amendment to stipulate that development there would only go ahead as the town's population grew and the market was there. Market studies, traffic impact stormwater management, retail market and engineering studies would have to be done before development could go ahead on the site.

Councillors also recommended that the Guelph St. corridor and the Mountainview Rd. area be the primary commercial area in Georgetown and that the development of new department store type businesses other than the Dominion Gardens site be restricted to only 52,000 square feet.

The study also indicated that future food store floor space go to Guelph St., 12,000 square feet in the downtown and 15,000 square feet in

Georgetown south.

Regarding Georgetown's future residential development, with a target population of about 37,000, councillors agreed that a section in the western portion of the urban area (west of the fairgrounds bounded by Trafalgar Rd. and the civic centre in the south) should be designated medium density (townhouses) instead of the current high density.

Council agreed a portion of the lands off Guelph St., in the Mill St. and Dayfoot Dr. area be designated for medium density development, and that the arena in that area be designated for high density development. Council recommended any development on the arena site and neighboring Sacre Coeur site be integrated in their design, and that parkland be made available there.

Regarding Acton's commercial development councillors recommended that the lands at Hwy 7 and Churchill Rd., where the proposed Coscan shopping centre is to be built, be designated as a Community Commercial Area, allowing for up to 30,000 square feet of grocery store space and 45,000 square feet for department store space.

Council also recommended that the land where the Ajax building is located in Acton be designated as a Neighborhood Commercial Area, permitting a 17,500 square foot commercial development.

It was also agreed at the meeting Tuesday night that the north-east and east areas of Acton be the main focus for residential development in the future. Acton's population growth will be limited to about 10,000 people due to lack of servicing capacity.

Town planning staff plan to hold a public meeting on Monday, May 31. Council is tentatively set to adopt the amendments on June 28.

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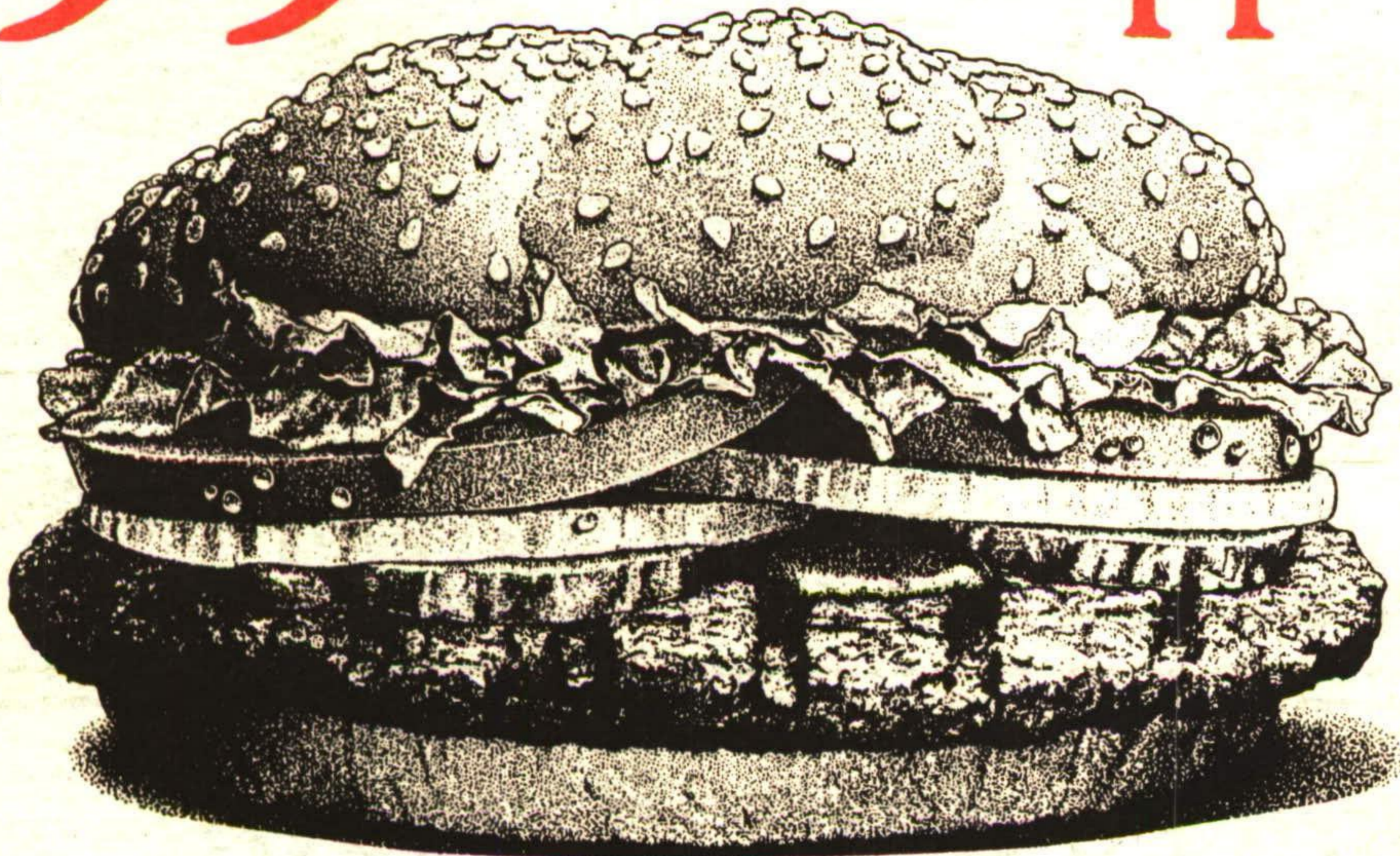
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