

Council gets first hand look at Urban Structure Review

By LISA TALLYN
Staff writer

Halton Hills council members got a long list of reasons at Monday night's council meeting why Halton's Urban Structure Review (HUSR) doesn't include urban growth for Halton Hills along the 401 corridor.

Ray Simpson of Hemson Consulting Ltd. of Toronto, currently working on the HUSR for the region, said that industrial development on Halton Hills lands along the 401 would not be in the best interests of the town from a planning perspective.

"You have to think about what kind of community you are developing," said Simpson. "In my opinion, if you designate the frontage

you will create pressure for an additional growth node."

Creating another node is not what the region wants to do in Halton Hills over the next 20 years. As outlined in its proposed official plan it is interested in encouraging development in existing nodes (such as Georgetown's and Acton's downtown areas) to create compact, transit-friendly communities.

The HUSR has targeted Milton and north Oakville as the main areas for urban growth in the region through 2011.

Simpson was at the council meeting along with several Halton Region staff members to



MARILYN SERJEANTSON

as water from Peel, and would attract only low value uses resulting in a low quality

give a progress report on HUSR and outline the region's proposed official plan to council members.

Other reasons Simpson gave for not including the Halton Hills lands in the extended urban area were the fact that development there might reduce the marketability of existing lands in Georgetown, and that it may create a development pattern that would weaken the town.

Simpson also said that the lands would likely only be developed with partial services, such as water from Peel, and would attract only low value uses resulting in a low quality

entrance to Halton Hills.

Councillors Marilyn Serjeantson and Pam Johnston agreed to work on a resolution from council that would let the region know what Halton Hills council thinks about the preferred development concept outlined in the HUSR.

"I feel that we have really been shafted with the 401 corridor," said Johnston. "I have listened to their arguments (the planner and region staff) and I think it's hogwash."

Halton Hills council has until mid-May to comment on the HUSR.

Final recommendations from the review are to go before regional council in late September as the Halton Urban Structure Plan.

HALTON HILLS

WEEKEND

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News

Digest

Smoking policy deferred

Halton Hills council members decided at Monday's council meeting to defer passing the bylaw calling for a prohibition on smoking until the requirement for a smoking section in restaurants can be made more clear. Town staff is to investigate the number of restaurants in town, and their seating capacities, then report back with suggested wording for the bylaw. Some councillors said that the bylaw should be more specific and require a percentage of tables in a restaurant be non-smoking instead of a section as approved last week.

Trailer burns

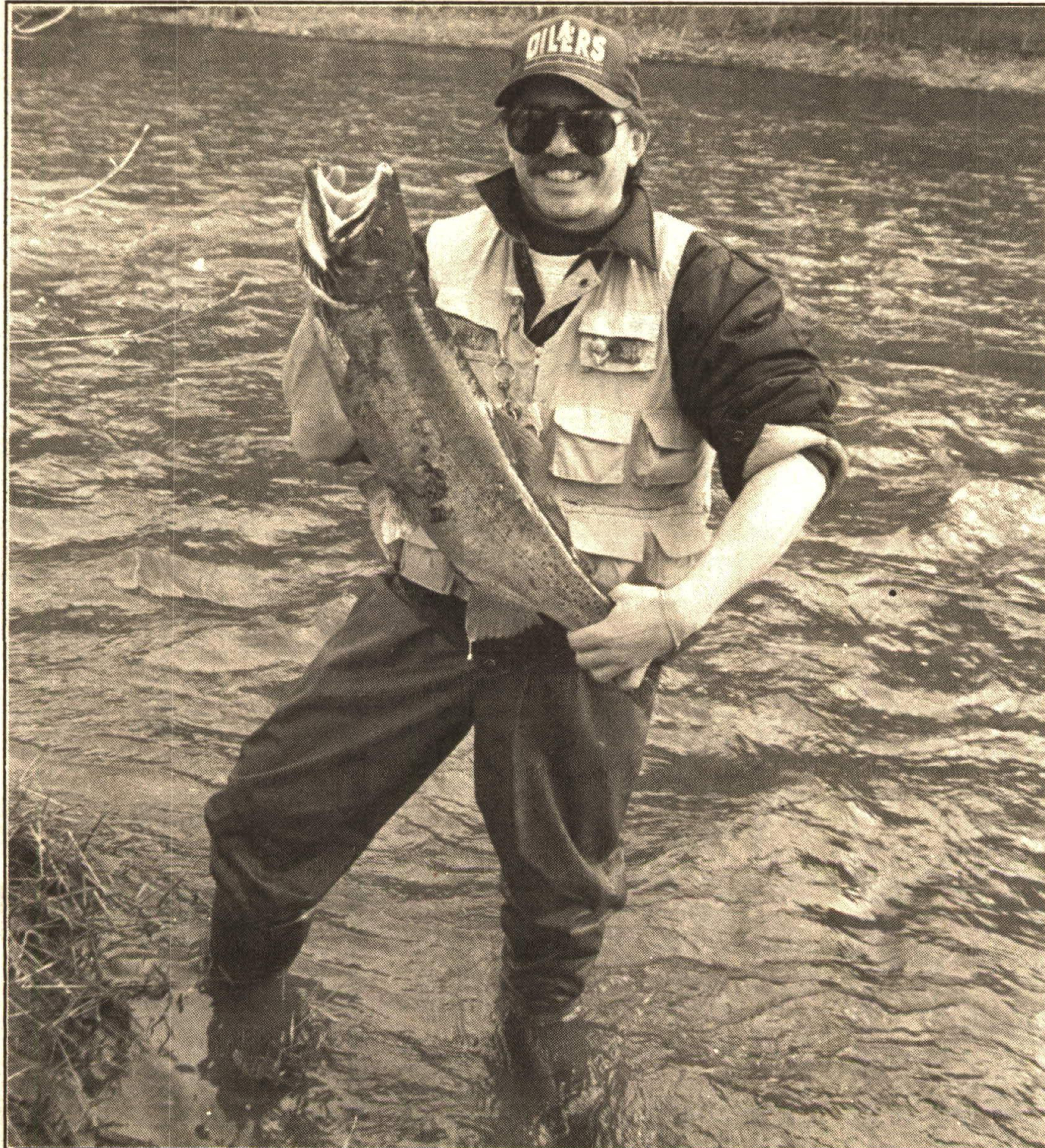
Arson is suspected in a fire on Winston Churchill Blvd. at 11:30 a.m. last Saturday. A construction trailer worth \$2,000 was destroyed, the Halton Hills fire department spokesperson said.

GDHS vandalized

Exterior exhaust fans were damaged when vandals got up on the roof of Georgetown and District High School overnight Tuesday. A number of beer bottles were left at the scene, police said. About \$1,200 damage was done to the fans.

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What a catch!

While not all fishermen came away with a prize catch as trout season opened last Saturday, this lucky angler did. Tim Stevens of East York makes a trip to the Credit River at this time each year and landed this beauty. Stevens, who fishes for the pure fun of it released this rainbow trout. Resident expert Perry Steel was close by when it was landed and estimated Stevens' catch at an honest nine pounds.

Photo by LAURA SALVERDA

Town gets tough with late taxes

By LISA TALLYN
Staff writer

The town's tax department got the go-ahead from council Monday night to take stronger measures to collect late taxes from area businesses.

In a seven to five vote councillors supported a change in the tax department's collection procedures making it possible for the tax collector to call in a bailiff to seize property or chattel if a business's taxes are 21 days late.

Town treasurer Ray King said that it was not the tax department's intent to send the bailiff in after 21 days however. As in the past notices would be sent, and the tax department would attempt to work out a payment plan with the business owner if he couldn't pay his bill completely.

"But there are situations where people just don't intend to pay their taxes," said King. "We have had people look us right in the eye and tell us they were not going to pay them."

"It is to the town's advantage to collect the taxes, not seize goods."

King told council members that the town has had the legal right to send the bailiff in after 21 days for some time but hasn't taken that step out of sensitivity for the taxpayers.

In the past the tax department has actually waited until the following year to take action on business owners who failed to pay their taxes the previous year.

Now the department will be able to attempt to collect the taxes in the same year the arrears occur.

"We will use it in a responsible manner, as we have in the past," said King.

Council members supported the stricter measures despite a plea from Georgetown businessman David Bracken to make the deadline 60 or 90 days, not 21.

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