

Acton High School students meet with Mayor and Councillors

By: Dawn Brown

Halton Hills town council was “taken to school,” according to Mayor Rick Bonnette this past Thursday, January 14 when they attended a mock town council meeting at Acton

High School. Five student delegations presented to the council, including: grade nine geography students encouraging the Town of Halton Hills to join David Suzuki’s Blue Dot Movement, grade 12 challenge

and change students presenting their empathy library, the gender and sexuality alliance’s (GSA) proposal for gender neutral bathrooms in municipal buildings, grade 10 business students promoting young entrepreneurs, and a presentation from the school’s Safe Schools Action Team. Regional Councillor Clark Somerville made the final presentation regarding engaging youth in local government.

The event was a collaborative effort between Acton High School and the Halton Public Health Department. One of the organizers, Rob Pozeg with the Halton Public Health Department, explained the event came about as a

means of integrating health and education, and that a sense of community works to bind those factors.

“This was a great opportunity to bring together lots of different people, connect the dots between health and education, between the town and the school specifically,” Pozeg said.

All Halton Hills councillors and the mayor attended the meeting as well as a number of town staff.

“The youth today have more pressures than I faced, and many of us faced, when we were 20 years old,” Mayor Bonnette said, when addressing students at the end of the presentations. “If there’s anything we can do to make your transition as you leave the school—whether it’s entrepreneurship, the many different things we talked about, gender neutral washrooms—anything that this council can do to make your lives easier, better and fulfilled we’re willing to do so.”

MPP Arnott launches petition on hydro rates

Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott is launching a petition calling on the Ontario Government to take immediate action to stabilize hydro rates.

“Our petition intended to make it easy for people to speak out against their ever higher hydro bills and make their voice heard,” Mr. Arnott said. The rising cost of hydro is being felt across the province. “Seniors, families, farmers, small businesses, manufacturers—everyone is struggling with high electricity bills,” said Arnott.

The Ontario PC Caucus has been raising concerns at Queen’s Park for years about hydro. They say the increase in hydro rates can be directly attributed to the Liberal Government’s mismanagement of the electricity sector.

“Whether it’s the vastly inflated prices for green energy, the politically motivated decisions to cancel the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants, smart meters that have failed to meet their conservation

targets and aren’t working in rural Ontario, and now the sale of majority control of Hydro One, the Liberals have shown that they think there’s no limit to what the ratepayer can afford to pay,” argued Mr. Arnott.

The 2015 Auditor General’s report found that Ontarians overpaid for electricity by \$37 billion over the past eight years. The report went on to say that if nothing changes, that number will rise by an additional \$133 billion over the next 18 years.

Copies of the petition are available by contacting Mr. Arnott’s Riding Office at 1-800-265-2366 or ted.arnottco@pc.ola.org. Mr. Arnott intends to present the petitions he receives from constituents in the Ontario Legislature in the Spring Sitting.

“By signing the petition, you can help me make the point that the Government must reverse its current course on electricity policy,” Mr. Arnott concluded.



Regional Councillor Clark Somerville, Councillors Bryan Lewis, David Kentner, Mayor Rick Bonnette and Town Clerk Suzanne Jones talk with students at Acton High.

Ontario making hospital parking more affordable

Ontario is making hospital parking more affordable for thousands of patients, their loved ones and caregivers. As of October 1, 2016, hospitals that charge more than \$10 a day for parking will be required to provide 5-, 10- and 30-day passes that are:

- Discounted by 50 per cent off their daily rate
- Transferable between patients and caregivers
- Equipped with in-and-out privileges throughout a 24-hour period
- Good for one year from the date of purchase.

Ontario consulted with patients, patient advocacy groups, hospitals and the Ontario Hospital Association to find a fair plan

that reduces the financial burden of parking fees for patients and their visitors.

“Parking fees should never be a barrier for patients when they go to the hospital. With today’s announcement, we are providing relief from the high cost of parking at some hospitals in Ontario. By making parking more affordable for patients and their loved ones who visit the hospital often, we are helping to reduce the burden of parking fees and putting patients first.” – Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

Between now and October 1, 2016, hospitals will work directly with their Patient and Family Advisory Councils to implement this new policy, ensuring that it is well promoted

and easy to understand. Each hospital will provide details on its specific parking policy and discounts.

Approximately 900,000 patients and visitors – including 135,000 seniors – are expected to benefit from reduced parking fees each year.

Saving patients and their loved ones money on hospital parking is part of the government’s plan to build a better Ontario through its *Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care*, which is providing patients with faster access to the right care, better home and community care, the information they need to stay healthy and a health care system that’s sustainable for generations to come.

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