



Town and Halton Hills Hydro thank residents for support

A great deal of work still to be done

The damage our community sustained as a result of the ice storm has been devastating. At a time when families were making last minute Christmas plans, we experienced a significant ice storm; which downed power lines and tree limbs.

At one point, all 23,000 of Halton Hills Hydro's customers were without power. Some were without for a very short period; unfortunately others endured outages that lasted more than a week as the service stacks and meter bases on their individual homes were damaged.

Staff at both Halton Hills Hydro and the Town have worked long and tirelessly throughout the storm and the subsequent clean-up. Some of these individuals did so even while their own homes were without power. This was a storm that affected us all, but the community rallied together.

We also acknowledge that, for many people, this was a frustrating time and some expressed anger over the length of time it took to reconnect their service. We understand and empathize. The storm encased tree limbs and power lines with heavy ice and then the winds made it treacherous for our outside line workers, and then it snowed. The ice storm ravaged our community on December 22, but the weather was a challenge throughout the restoration and clean-up. Coupled with the extent of the damage, this has been a massive undertaking.

We did not declare a state of emergency since our staff was able to address the community's needs and such a declaration would not have restored power any quicker.

We called for external assistance as the storm hit and lined up a power line contractor and a local tree clearing contractor in anticipation of the damage. We also reached out to utilities and contractors outside of our community on the first day of the storm; however, the ice storm hit most of the GTA and other parts of Southern Ontario at the same time, so there was only a few contractor's available until a few days after the storm's damage. Once other communities completed their reconnections, we received tremendous support from Waterloo North Hydro, Bluewater Power (Sarnia), Guelph Hydro, Oakville Hydro, London Hydro, Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro, Westario Power (Kincardine, Port Elgin, Hanover), Woodstock Hydro, Welland Hydro, Hydro One, Westmore Powerlines, Dundas Powerlines, Quality Tree, Davey Tree and Asplundt Tree contractors. We couldn't have done it without them, and we sincerely thank them for their support.

We also saw countless acts of kindness from members of our community; not that we were surprised by this. There were numerous stories of people taking in their neighbours for days to ensure they were comfortable. Our hydro crews received many signs of encouragement from the community. It was the demonstrated support of our community that provided a boost to the morale of our crews.

Customers honked their car horns and our crews saw many friendly and supportive waves as they reconnected lines and cleared trees. We received numerous emails, Tweets and Facebook posts from people expressing genuine emotions of appreciation and thanks. People in Acton cooked and delivered more than 50 turkey lunches on Christmas day for our hydro crews and office staff. Members of Milton Baptist Church also delivered 50 pasta dinners to our employees on Christmas night. Bethel Christian Reformed Church provided a lunch and a dinner to crews and St. Albans Church also provided food for our crews. Town Councillors also stepped up and did what they could.

It has been a difficult few weeks, but the sense of community and generosity of spirit has been tremendous. The clean-up is far from finished. We expect it will take Town and hydro crews months to get to everything, but it will all get done.

Thank you Halton Hills for your patience and strength - we will learn from this experience. We will analyze how we responded and we'll make necessary enhancements. We are a stronger community as a result of this storm and we look forward to better days ahead.

Respectfully,

Rick Bonnette
Mayor
Town of Halton Hills

Arthur A. Skidmore
President & CEO
Halton Hills Hydro



FLOATING FUN: Acton's Teresa and Luka Gataveckas enjoyed a splash last Thursday at the Acton pool. Lukas, 4, was getting ready for Town swimming lessons that began this week. — Frances Learment photo

OMB decides Acton East No Frills supermarket proposal

With no opposition expected, the threatened fight against a No Frills supermarket in Acton East turned into a "settlement-type" hearing at an Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearing yesterday (Wednesday) at the Civic Centre in Georgetown.

On Monday, John Linhardt, the Town's Director of Planning, Development & Sustainability was expecting a quick "yes." "The real question is whether the Board will issue an oral decision right on the spot and follow it in writing," Linhardt said, adding he'd be "surprised" if the Town did not get an oral decision.

Linhardt said typically

the OMB would require some planning evidence in support of Town Council's approval of Craft Development Limited's 28,500-square-foot supermarket on the south side of Queen Street, west of Tanners Drive. The development required a land use change to "corridor commercial" from medium density housing. The issue went to the OMB after the Town did not respond to Craft's application within a prescribed period.

Although a 10-day OMB hearing was slated to begin earlier this week, it was changed to a one-day hearing following Town Council's 7-2 vote in favour of the development in October,

followed by the owners of the adjacent Sobeys plaza dropping their formal objection.

Acton's Al Scott, an early, vocal critic of the development adjacent to his backyard, said removal of an entrance/exit to Tanners Drive, and proposed tree-planting screening adjacent to backyards would "appease many of the neighbours."

He said neighbours couldn't afford a lawyer to have official standing at the OMB hearing, but he hoped to speak at yesterday's hearing as an interested party to confirm details of Craft's plans to ease the impact on adjacent neighbours.

Another earlier critic, area resident Real Tetreault decided not to attend the OMB hearing as the revised plan is "the best deal for the closest neighbours."

"I don't think it's the right place, but removing the road to Tanners (Drive) satisfied me, to a certain point," Tetreault said on Saturday.

No Frills is a Canadian discount supermarket chain owned by Loblaw Companies Limited, a subsidiary of George Weston Limited. Stores feature lower prices, somewhat limited stock, and shoppers self-pack service their groceries in their own bags, or pay five cents per bag.

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