

# Habitat for Humanity coming to Acton?

*Churchill Road subdivision part of Habitat Halton's 75 houses in five years plan in Region*

Habitat for Humanity Halton wants to help build at least nine homes for low-income families in Acton. Its plans for Trinity Court on Churchill Road north were unveiled at Sunday's Acton Ecumenical Unity Service at the Legion.

Mirela Vukosa Giannidis, Habitat Halton's director of family community partnerships, said they are currently "in discussion" with the property owner, for the fully-serviced subdivision. "The property has the potential for nine units, with the possibility of a few more, but this does require a rezoning and working with the Town," she said, adding the Mayor and Town have been "incredibly co-operative" through the development process.

The Acton plan is part

of Habitat's ambitious five-year plan to build 75 affordable homes in Halton to "break the cycle of poverty" for the approximately 4,000 residents in need of affordable housing. "We enable low-income, hard working families living in need to purchase an affordable home of their own..." she said. No-interest mortgages allow Habitat homebuyers, who must contribute "sweat equity", to keep housing costs to 30 per cent of their income.

Ukosa Giannidis asked for help from volunteers, adding Habitat is offering extensive training in coming months for people who have some construction/renovation experience, or who are mentors. "We are currently accepting

homeownership applications," she said inviting people with questions to meet after the meeting.

After the service, Habitat executive assistant Sharon Arsenault said the property owner has given Habitat permission to carry out "due diligence" with the Town planning process, and that they hope to buy the land and break ground in 2015 for "more than nine" homes including singles, semi-detached and townhouses. "We've had all kinds of positive support from the Town and the Mayor and now the community," Arsenault said.

Habitat Halton also has two additional higher-density, multiple-unit developments planned for Burlington, and construction is underway on a semi-detached house for



**HABITAT HOME?** This nine-lot approved subdivision on Churchill Road North - known as Trinity Court - could be the site of a Habitat for Humanity Halton project. Talks are underway with the owner, Elli-Finn Construction Ltd., and Town - Frances Learment photo

two families in Milton. Habitat says homeownership is more than just a roof over a head - it has a measurably positive impact on the health and financial stability of lower income families, according to Canada Mortgage and

Housing Corporation research. Homeowners report feeling safer and happier with less illness, less stress and kids who get better grades.

Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette said after years of inactivity, it was good to see Habitat's in-

terest in the property, with its "hand up, not hand out approach." On Monday, noting there are five Habitat projects in Halton Hills, and all are a credit to their communities. Bonnette also noted at one point the plans for the site was for 21 units.

## TOWN DIGEST

### STORM RELIEF

With full recovery years away, Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette said "very cordial" talks between GTA Mayors and Chairs and the province on Friday showed a "willingness to listen" to requests for \$275-million in ice storm relief.

Bonnette said the key message from the meeting, hosted by Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion, was municipalities can't be ignored, and want to be treated equally. They said as much in a joint resolu-

tion to the provincial and federal governments asking them each to cover one-third of the costs of ice storm response and on-going recovery efforts. Bonnette said they asked for a response by March 1, but April 1 would be "acceptable."

During a private session, Bonnette said they told Linda Jeffrey, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing "how bad (the storm) was, and debated the final resolution to the Prime Minister and Ontario Premier. "The

province has a billion dollars in a reserve fund for economic downturns - we're basically only asking for 10 per cent of that...I don't think we've asked for anything unreasonable."

During operating budget talks on Monday, Bonnette said there is no money earmarked for storm response in this year's operating budget, and the Town is focusing on cleanup this year while staffs "do a (storm) assessment and are able to develop a plan."

Town staff meet with provincial disaster relief officials tomorrow (Friday) to talk about the Town's costs \$3.7-mil-

lion storm-relates costs, including hydro.

### ACTIVAN EXTENSION

With a growing, happy ridership, Town Council voted to extend its contract for ActiVan Services - busses for seniors and the disabled - with Tyler Transport Limited for one year.

In a report to council last Monday, Fleet and Transit Supervisor Paul Sargent recommended extending Tyler's contract for a year, noting the company agreed to hold its 2013 prices for operating three ActiVan vehicles, which provide transportation to 1,900 riders.

Council authorized

paying two invoices for \$55,631, and said a significant portion of the over expenditure was because two of the existing ActiVan vehicles are at the end of their life spans, driving up maintenance and rental replacement costs. Staff is waiting for replacement vehicles ordered last year.

With 1,900 riders, the ActiVan Service moved 41,000 passengers with a cost per passenger if approximately \$18.77, up slightly from the previous year.

*Full disclosure: The New Tanner publisher also owns Tyler Transport Limited.*

**POTHOLE PATROL**  
Some Halton Hills pot-

holes may be deeper than they look, so the Town is cautioning drivers to be alert, especially since recent freezes/thaws caused even more potholes.

In a press release issued Friday, the Town advised motorists that pothole repairs will slow traffic - potholes on high-traffic arterial roads are repaired first, followed by collectors, and then residential streets.

The patching being done now is temporary until spring thaw when the crumbling pavement will be filled with a more permanent asphalt material.

Know of a pothole? Report it at 905-873-2601 ext. 2603

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