



Sprawl solution in Rockwood?

Meeting with Minister may fix planning concerns

The province will consider increasing the population of Wellington County to resolve planning issues jeopardizing two new schools in Rockwood, and a park expansion plan, considered urban sprawl under provincial Places to Grow legislation.

Guelph/Eramosa Township Mayor Chris White reported the favourable solution to

Council last Monday in an update on his meeting with Ontario Infrastructure Minister Glen Murray at the ROMA – the rural arm of the Association of Ontario Municipalities – conference in Toronto two weeks ago.

Places to Grow fights urban sprawl by limiting growth within urban boundaries, but White said by “moving the numbers” and increasing the County’s population by 10,000, it will accommodate the three developments – a public school, a separate school and expansion of Rockwood Park, all of which are outside the urban boundary.

After the meeting White said the population targets to 2031 are “rather arbitrary” and need to be flexible. “What’s the alternative? To turn away two schools and a park because they’re worried about what’s going to happen in 25 years?”

The developments in question include the Upper Grand District School Board’s proposed \$6.2-million elementary school in south Rockwood, a \$6.6-million Catholic school, and 22-acre expansion of Rockwood Park. After approval by the County, White expects the province will approve the plan.

TOWNSHIP SHORTS

HOW QUICKLY THEY FORGET

Guelph/Eramosa Township Councillor Doug Breen was impressed with the very different “eager to please” mood of Queen’s Park officials at the recent Rural Ontario Municipalities Association conference in Toronto, but he was also a little surprised with the coldness of the politics.

“It was interesting how eager a lot of those people were to throw the old Premier under the bus,” Breen recounted at Council last Monday, adding it was like former Premier McGuinty was from another party.

Breen said it may have been lip service, but Queen’s Park officials were saying the right things, noting however with one infrastructure grant program

that amounts to “welfare for bridges” would be replaced with more permanent, predictable funding for infrastructure.

Guelph/Eramosa Township Mayor Chris White, who is also a ROMA second vice-chair, said they asked Queen’s Park to look at legislation through a “rural lens” because one size does not fill all, especially when it comes to planning.

“So, the whole idea is when you pass legislation you ask these 10 or 15 rural questions so there is a little bit of play and not sweeping legislation without a rural flavour,” White said, adding it is heartening that new Premier Wynne took over the agricultural portfolio after splitting it from rural affairs.

AVERY BRAVERY RACE

Several roads in Rockwood will be closed on April 27 for the fourth annual Avery’s Bravery Race, a fundraiser for Sick Kids organized by the family of Avery Bond who survived heart surgery when just days old.

A two-kilometre walk will take place in the Rockwood Conservation Area and Guelph/Eramosa Township Council approved an event permit for the event, including closing Fall Street, Mary Street, Pasmore Street, Balaclava Street, Richardson Street and Guelph Street for a five-kilometre run.

Last year’s event involved 250 participants and 50 volunteers and raised over \$6,600, bringing the three-year total to \$18,000 for Sick Kids.

Our MPP Reports by Ted Arnott

MPP Wellington - Halton Hills



For four months and four days, the lights were dimmed in the Ontario Legislature.

Finally on February 19, the provincial House resumed sitting, with a recycled Liberal Government’s Speech from the Throne.

Given that Premier Kathleen Wynne has said how proud she is of the McGuinty Government’s record, it should come as no surprise that the Throne Speech sounded like more of the same.

Listening to the Throne Speech, it occurred to me that the Government appears to be in denial. They seem to be completely oblivious to the significant economic challenges the Province faces today.

Whether it is the jobs challenge (565,000 Ontarians are unemployed), the deficit challenge (most recent estimate, \$11.9-billion), the rising provincial debt (\$258-billion), responsibility for cancelling the gas plants to save marginal Liberal seats (cost: hundreds of millions of dollars), the Provincial Government carries on as if the problems don’t exist.

Local issues of concern to small town and rural Ontario, like the need for a moratorium on wind farms pending the completion of a Health Canada study and the collapse of the horseracing industry, earned nary a mention.

To the extent that there was an effort to reach out to the Opposition, the governing Liberals veered left. In doing so, they sought and secured a promise of support from the NDP for the important Throne Speech vote.

Next, attention will turn to the upcoming provincial budget, expected sometime in April.

The Legislature’s Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs will soon begin pre-budget consultations. Anyone who wants to present ideas on what should be in the next provincial budget can email the Clerk of the Committee at katch_koch@ontla.ola.org. The deadline for written submissions is March 22.

Last week, I was glad to attend the 36th Annual Georgetown Hockey Heritage Awards Din-

ner, held in Acton.

We celebrated Pam and Bill MacGillivray’s contribution in blazing a trail for girls’ minor hockey.

Their leadership has given girls in our community an equal chance to enjoy Canada’s greatest and most beloved winter pastime. Our warmest thanks go out to Pam and Bill.

I was also happy to attend the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce Business Achievement Awards, held in Georgetown.

We celebrated the success of our business community, and the outstanding individual accomplishments of Andrea Clark of Tanner’s Pub and Grill in Acton, Nancy LaRose of the Acton Salvation Army Thrift Store, Val and Bill Manes of Acton Home Hardware, and Wendy Farrow Reed of the Downtown Georgetown BIA. Congratulations!

Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott welcomes your comments. He can be reached at 1-800-265-2366. His website address is www.tedarnottmpp.com

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