

Town Digest

NO HANGING CHADS

It is faster, cheaper, and while not cutting edge technology, when it comes to counting votes for the October 2014 municipal election, the Town will stick with the ballot scanner tabulation system it used in 2010 after switching from a paper ballot.

Councillors will leave debate over emerging Internet voting – used in Burlington for advance polls and being investigated by Milton and Oakville – to a future council. While more convenient, Internet voting would add \$74,000 to the election budget, along with dedicated IT staff for at least two years.

In a report to general committee last Tuesday, Town Clerk Suzanne Jones said Internet voting “should not be seen as a way to increase voter turnout or lessen voter apathy,” and its municipal use will continue to grow with increased confidence about security measures and ease-of-use programming. Going to a ballot scanner tabulation system meant a “large reduction” in ballot counting time and improved efficiency, helping reduce errors and omissions. The traditional paper ballot system cost \$4.65 per elector, compared to \$3.72 for the scanner tabulation system.

With no public debate, councillors approved a single purchase order with Dominion Voting Systems of Toronto, with an upset limit of \$62,150, to rent the vote tabulation equipment. They also approved spending \$22,600 to DataFix of Toronto for a municipal voters list management program.

HERITAGE BRIDGE WORK

Unsafe and deteriorating, the 27 Side Road stone arch bridge between Eight Line and Fall Brook Trail will be reconstructed by Drexler Construction Limited of Rockwood. Town councillors awarded Drexler the \$927,582 tender last Tuesday, a decision that will be ratified by council on June 10.

The existing one-lane stone arch structure was built in 1877, and deemed worthy for inclusion on the Ontario Heritage Bridge List. Area residents and officials with Credit Valley Conservation and Silver Creek Conservation Area,



COMEDY REVIEW: Acton’s Bruno Seiler acted as MC at a poorly-attended comedy night at the Acton Town Hall Centre on Friday night. – Ted Tyler photo

both owners of adjacent lands with trails, see the bridge as an important heritage feature.

An environmental assessment recommended the bridge be rebuilt, not replaced. In a report to general committee last Tuesday, John Kwast, Manager of Design and Construction, said problems getting environmental approvals delayed the project a year, adding \$99,239 to the cost, money to come from two reserve funds. The finished bridge will be one-and-a-half lanes wide, enough room for one car and pedestrians.

HERITAGE REGISTER UPDATE

The potential cultural heritage value of approximately 100 Acton properties will be reviewed during Phase three work on the Town’s Heritage Register. The Heritage Resource Centre at the University of Waterloo, with volunteer help from Heritage Halton Hills, is developing and expanding the Town’s Heritage Register, a list of properties valuable

for their cultural heritage or interest.

The Heritage Register lists all individually properties and properties within heritage conservation districts that are officially designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. To date, over 360 properties with heritage value have been listed and a \$27,761 tender approved by general committee last Tuesday will allow a review of the inventory of properties, analyze potential cultural value and consolidate the information into the Register format.

This summer, the Centre will review 369 properties for potential inclusion on the Register, and host a public open house for owners those properties. There is another \$25,000 in this year’s budget for a Phase four work, if necessary, to complete the Heritage Register.

While some property owners are worried inclusion on the Heritage Register will curtail their property rights; it only gives the Town a 60-day waiting period if the owner applies to demolish the property.



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