

Rock the Hills youth music festival unveiled for Halton Hills this summer

Arkells or Hollerado to headline mid-summer youth music festival?

The Hills – Halton Hills, that is – will be alive with the sounds of a “medium-level” Canadian band – talks are ongoing with *Arkells* and *Hollerado* – for an out-door summer youth music festival.

The Acton and Georgetown fair grounds, and Cedarvale Park could host *Rock the Hills*, expected to draw over 1,000 people on July 12, from 3 to 11 p.m.

Details of the festival came from planning team members at Monday’s council meeting as they asked for Town support with a council liaison, promotion, and funding.

Halton Hills Cultural Roundtable co-chair Beatrice Sharkey listed the pros: grow local talent, stage a youth event, promote Shop Local – and noted that Town studies identify the need for an event and mechanism to promote the many local youth bands in Halton Hills.

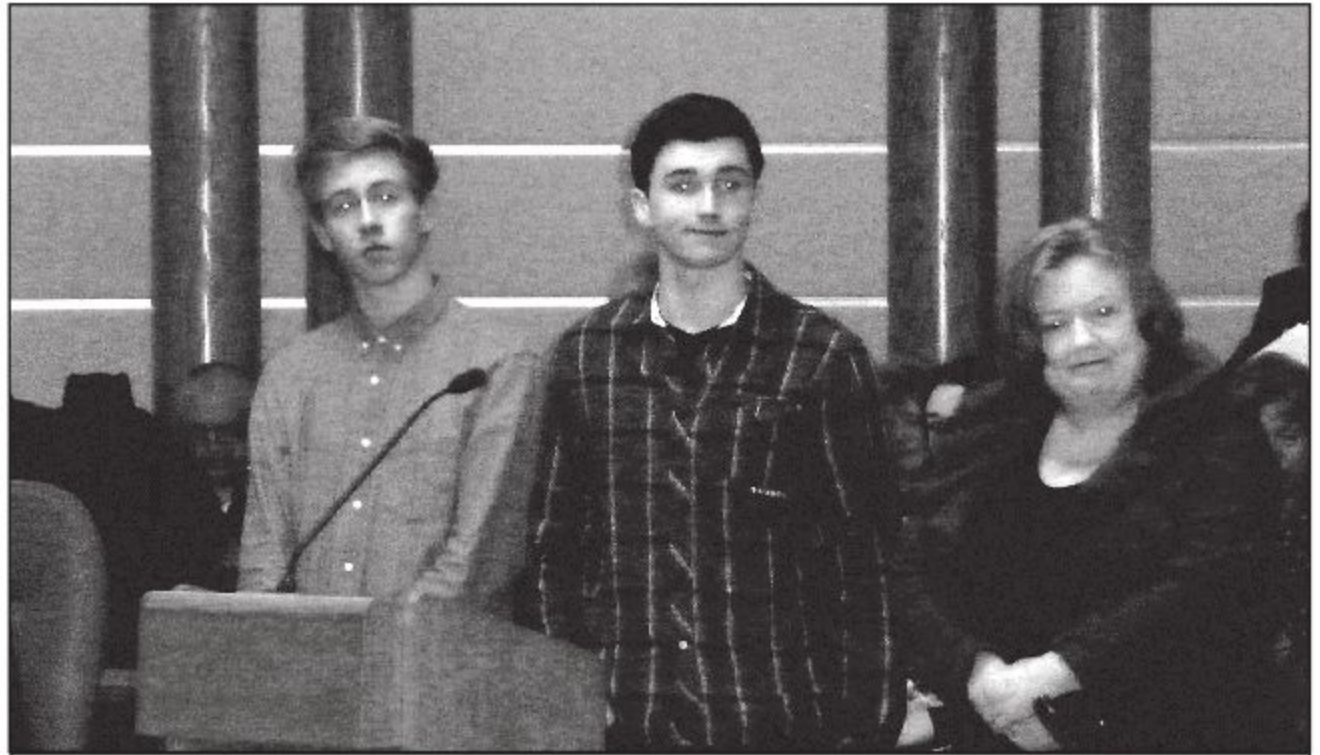
Event co-planner, local teen John Muirhead said while Halton Hills has an “amazing local music scene”, without local venues, many bands must travel outside of town to perform or stage their own shows. “So,

Rock the Hills would give local artists a chance to showcase their talent and allow local youth to gather in a safe and controlled environment, and also have something to look forward to, right here at home,” Muirhead said, adding he hopes it would be an annual event.

Muirhead said the event would be funded primarily through sales of 1,000 tickets, which he said was “very achievable depending on the headliner band.” “We also partnered with the Optimist Club, and we’re looking for local business sponsors to help us out as well,” he said, adding they also applied for a Town Municipal Assistance start-up grant. Other partners in the event include the three Halton Hills high schools; the Mayor’s Youth Action Committee, Town Youth Staff, and the Cultural Roundtable.

Regional/Ward Two Councillor Jane Fogal was “very excited” to hear about the event, and also about their partnerships, adding they were “well on their way to success.”

Regional/Acton Councillor Clark Somerville said he was “not as en-



READY TO ROCK: Organizers of Rock The Hills - a proposed youth music festival - pitched their plan to Halton Hills Council on Monday. Cameron Cerant, John Muirhead and Beatrice Sharkey with the Halton Hills Cultural Roundtable hope to sell at least 1,000 tickets for the outdoor event with a “medium-level” Canadian band, and five local bands - Frances Learment photo

thusiastic” as Councillor Fogal, asking why their proposed budget did not include the cost to rent a Town facility. Sharkey said they have applied for Municipal Assistance grant, which would be considered in January, to help with those costs, and with in-kind donations.

Mayor Rick, Bonnette, citing a past concert in Acton that lost \$7,000, and one in Norval that lost \$20,000, said he understood the need of

a \$10,000 headliner for the draw, but suggested organizers were “cutting very close (with) only \$1,320 profit.”

Sharkey said a \$2,600 contingency fund is a “little bit of a back-up”, and they are still negotiating with the Optimist Club about how much of its donation is a loan, and how much is a grant. She said they also “really low-balled” tickets sales of 700 in their budget and ticket income could

double. “We’re assuming we get a band the level of the *Arkells* that selling 1,200 to 1,500 tickets – as long as the venue will accommodate that – is not going to be a problem...” Sharkey said.

After finalizing the date, location and headliner, the event committee will negoti-

ate partnership details with the Optimist Club, complete permitting and security requirements, and develop sponsorship details.

The *Rock the Hills* committee will hold a “broad” planning meeting with partners, potential volunteers and sponsors on January 3.

*Glory to God
in the highest,
and on earth
peace, good will
toward men.
Luke 2:14*

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