

Rural residents want Town Council to use emotions not hard data

Some rural Acton residents are "disappointed" with the measures the Town is willing to take to improve traffic and pedestrian safety on the Fourth Line between Highway 7 and 32 Side Road. An operational review found that many of the residents' requests to improve safety are not warranted or appropriate. The Town will not reduce the speed limit on Fourth Line or ask the province for a traffic light at the Fourth Line/Highway 7 intersection, as repeatedly requested by residents.

"I was hoping they (councillors) would look at the human aspect of it and not just look at it from a technical aspect, and I don't think they are going to do that," Fourth Line resident Dan Poirier said following his delegation to Town Council at a recent meeting when he told councillors that "the safety of my family is being compromised."

While traffic counts show many of the requested improvements are not warranted, Poirier wanted councillors to look beyond the figures to the human side of the issue. A staff report, endorsed by Council on Monday night said the existing speed limits are appropriate, and an all-way stop is not an appropriate measure for Fourth Line/32 Side Road intersection conditions. A speed study showed that the average speed of vehicles on the Fourth Line is 10-kilometres over the limit.

Staff said a knoll should be removed to improve

sightlines at the intersection, and additional traffic signs should be installed on both the Fourth Line and 32 Side Road. Two intersection streetlights will be installed at the same intersection and an existing light will be re-aimed. Two culverts on the Fourth Line will be replaced.

Poirier was not impressed. "They'll ask the police to come by, and they'll come by a couple of times over the next two months and then we won't see them again," Poirier said, adding safety would be improved if people would just slow down and watch for children, people out walking with their dogs and hikers.

In January, 130 residents, armed with stories of accidents and near-misses, signed a petition asking the Town to improve safety by reducing the speed limit on the Fourth Line to 50 km/h from 60 km/h, by posting a four-way stop at the Fourth Line and 32 Side Road. The petition asked for a stop light at Highway 7 and the Fourth Line, a prohibition of large trucks unless on local delivery and more policing. Last year, the Town reduced the speed limit on 32 Side Road to 70 km/h from 80 km/h, and banned trucks from the Third line to the western boundary of Ballinafad.

Poirier said removal of the knoll is not an issue and additional lights cause pollution, and motorists' behaviour must change. Fourth Line resident Frank Piccolotto also appealed to councillors to ask the

Minister of Transportation for a traffic light at the Highway 7/Fourth Line intersection, and to reduce speed limits. He said if area residents can live with the consequences of slower speeds – Town staff said they could lead to unnecessary ticketing and a false sense of security for people walking on the roads – then they will.

Matt Roj, the Town's Traffic Coordinator noted that the speed limit was reduced to 70 km/h from 80 km/h in 2010, and even before the review, he knew that traffic counts would not warrant a stoplight at Highway 7 and Fourth Line. He said two-thirds of traffic on the roads in question is local, not people using a rural bypass.

Acton Councillor Mike O'Leary suggested they ask Halton police to focus some of the "substantial" radar activity south of Highway 7 on the Fourth Line, to north of the highway. Mayor Rick Bonnette asked if Council could have a stop light installed even if the traffic numbers didn't warrant it,



QUICK BIDS: Local auctioneer Doug Donaldson kept the bids coming fast and furious at the Denny family auction on Saturday at the family's property west of Acton. – Frances Niblock photo

and Raj said it's a Ministry of Transportation decision, and it took eight years to get an unwarranted stop in Georgetown at Main Street North and Highway 7.

A large over-sized "Intersection Ahead" sign will be installed on the east approach of 32 Side Road to the Fourth Line, and the budget committee will discuss a \$200,000 expenditure to remove a knoll to the west of the intersection to improve intersection visibility.

Tributes to the late Ken Gagnon at Guelph/Eramosa Township Council

Hailed as a great employee and good friend, Guelph/Eramosa Township councillors paid tribute to the late Ken Gagnon, the Township's Director of Public Works for seven years, who died of cancer on September 2.

Councillor Doug Breen said Gagnon quietly did his job, often resolving issues before councillors even knew they existed. He said Gagnon made his job easier with his extensive knowledge and experience. Mayor Chris White said Gagnon's role in the Township "transcended" just being an employee, and he was also a great family man.

A celebration of Gagnon's life is slated for September 17 at 2 p.m., at the Gilbert MacIntyre Funeral Home's Hart Chapel in Guelph.


Baseline Bridge tender

The tender approved by Guelph/Eramosa Township Council to replace the culvert/bridge on Jones Baseline Road, just north of Highway 7, is \$202,156, more than twice the amount budgeted.

Staff said the price exceeds the budget because the work precedes the reconstruction of Jones Baseline Road, and parts of that work, budgeted for next year, are in the tender.

Also, the Grand River Conservation Authority required a larger and more costly culvert, and because of erosion over the summer, the culvert must be longer, and more costly. The Township had \$95,000 in this year's budget to replace the culvert/bridge. The additional money will come from a bridge replacement reserve.


The tender was awarded to Taylor Wakefield General Contractors Ltd.

 **We Celebrated**

Ena Gibson's 75th Birthday

Thank you to my family and friends for helping me celebrate my 75th birthday. Your visits, phone calls, gifts and cards were greatly appreciated. For those who were able to visit, I hope you enjoyed the day as much as I did.

Ena Gibson




LAKESIDE TUNES: The Acton band Cosmic Warehouse, featuring Acton's Gord Dowling and guest singer Louise Siekierko of Terra Cotta, entertained an appreciative group on the patio at the Acton Legion on Saturday. – Ted Tyler photo

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