



CHRISTMAS CHORALE: A large appreciate crowd enjoyed the Georgetown Bach Chorale's presentation of Handel's Messiah on Saturday at the Acton Town Hall Centre. Soprano soloists Carol Lee (left) Jane Potovszky and Celine Moore were in fine voice. – Ted Tyler photos



Town Digest

No fee for fun
A proposed new \$25 fee for a family fireworks permit will be cut from an updated schedule of Town rates and fees, but the issue of requiring a permit for large fireworks displays will be sent back to the Town's Fire Services Committee for further study.

While suggesting new fees for the fireworks permits for personnel on fire watch and to replace hazardous material supplies and equipment, a Town consultants looking into full cost recovery through rates and fees cautioned Council to make sure any new fees don't deter people from reporting a dangerous situation or activity, like fireworks displays.

Georgetown Councillor Ann Lawlor asked councillors to eliminate the fee, and initially the permit as well, saying it was an "unnecessary extraction of a fee for having fun." Fire Chief Harry Olivieri said the existing bylaw covers permits to inspect areas where fireworks will be set off other than on Victoria Day and Canada Day. He said they get approximately six such

permit applications a year, and has never turned one down, to his knowledge.

Deputy Chief Olivieri explained that the proposed \$195 for a large fireworks display, deals with the size of the fireworks being set off, not the size of the group staging it. Councillors agreed with Acton Councillor Jon Hurst who said the permit requirement was a "safety issue" and should be deferred back to committee for more discussion.

Somerville at FCM

Municipal politicians, including Regional/Acton Councillor Clark Somerville, left last week's meetings with Federal officials in Ottawa with a renewed hope for a new infrastructure funding plan when the current stimulus program ends in 2014.

During Advocacy Days on Parliament Hill, officials with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) met with the counterparts from across Canada, federal party leaders, cabinet ministers and members of Parliament of all stripes, to discuss the issues municipalities face.

"It's a new Parliament with a lot of first-time MPs – we went into (the meetings with MPs) just to say that we wanted to preserve the money we have, and let's get talking about long-term stuff for when these (stimulus) programs end in 2014," Somerville said on Monday.

Each MP that FCM officials met with received a copy of everything that FCM had done in their riding, including lobbying for additional gas tax revenues, GST rebates and projects in their area, Somerville said.

"No matter how localized we think an issue is, out of the 2,500 communities in Canada, we're all going through the same things...with tight budgets, the difficulties of changing demographics and providing infrastructure," Somerville said.

Somerville was appointed the vice-chair of the FCM Rural Forum on Municipal Infrastructure, and will sit on the committee dealing with municipal finance and intergovernmental relations, and also sits on a Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade working group.

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The Dove Tree will be in the funeral home until December 24th at 5p.m.

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