

OPINION

Show us the money

On Friday Mayor Rick Bonnette with other GTA mayors banded together in a united front to request funding from the Province to help pay for the more than \$250 million cost of the December ice storm.

The Mayors are not only asking for funding from the Province, but also from the Federal government. They are calling for both those levels of government, and the affected municipality to each contribute a third of the cost. They would like to hear back from the feds and the Province by March 1.

"It makes more sense to work at this collectively rather than individually," said Bonnette. He added the 1/3 formula is reasonable. "Otherwise it's going to be a burden on the (local) taxpayer," he said.

The Town of Halton Hills is estimating its cost to clean up from the storm and Halton Hills Hydro's tally to restore power at \$3.7 million. None of the Hydro costs are eligible for disaster relief funding.

"The mayors for the most part feel we're going to get very little from the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program, just from history and the criteria," said Bonnette.

Halton Hills taxpayers pay 47 per cent of their taxes to the federal government, 44 per cent to the provincial and only 9 per cent to the municipality. That's a small slice of the pie.

Halton Hills taxpayers have contributed through their income taxes to many disaster relief programs—across the country and the world—over the years. Now its Halton Hills' turn to receive some help.

It's time both federal and provincial levels of government stepped up to the plate to help municipalities cope with the ice storm recovery costs.

"Just as neighbor pitched in to help neighbour after the ice storm, I submit the Provincial government has an absolute obligation to help Ontario's municipalities with legitimate ice storm clean up costs," said MPP Ted Arnott in a letter sent to Premier Kathleen Wynne on Monday.

And hopefully we won't have to wait for a provincial or federal election before we see any money.

WEB POLL RESULTS

(Go to www.theifp.ca)

The Town estimates 1,500 Town-owned trees were lost in the ice storm. How would you like to pay for the \$750,000 replacement cost?

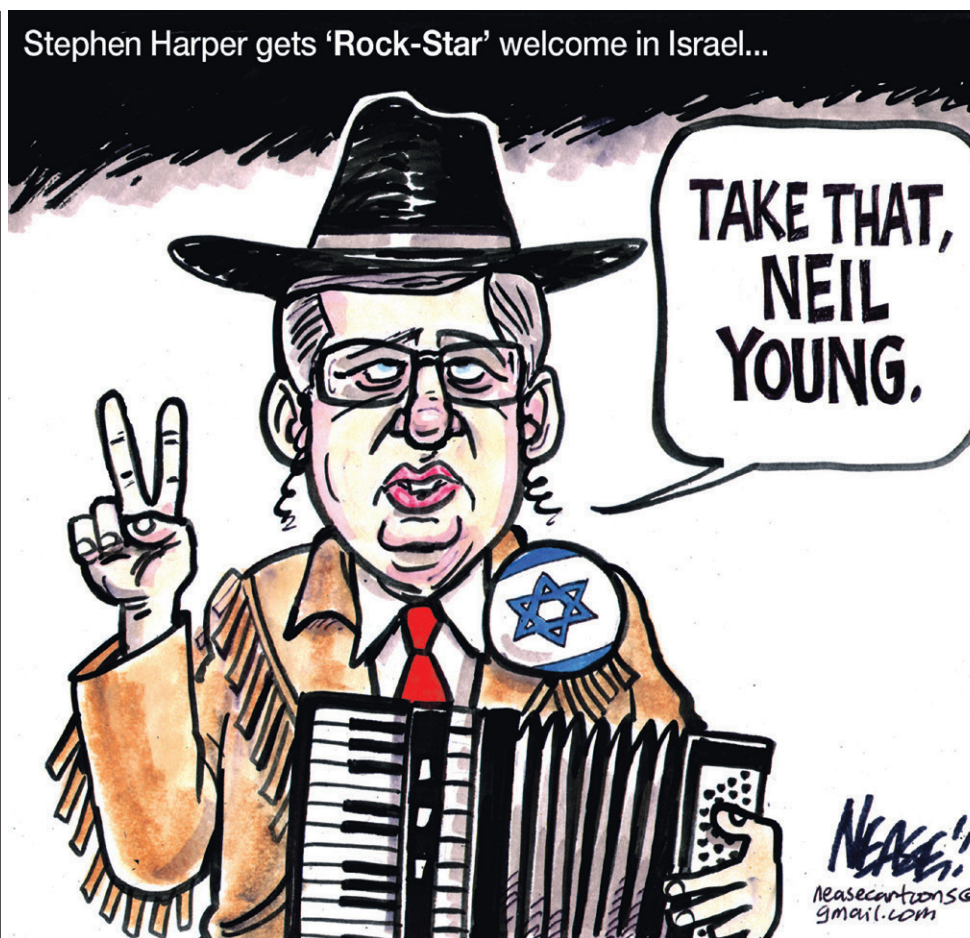
- Don't replace the trees (42%)
- Convince the Province's disaster relief fund org. to pay (36%)
- Set up community fundraising (17%)
- Add a special levy on Town taxes (5%)

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Letters to the editor

Hilly Clayhill Road has special needs

Dear editor,

We are very disappointed in the way our roads are looked after up here (north of Glen Williams). We are always the last road (Clayhill Rd.) to be cleared. I get we are not as important as the streets in Georgetown. We are human though, and pay taxes like everyone else.

The ice storm took its toll on everyone, I understand that, but up here we were left for four days without anyone coming here. It was bad enough we had no power, water or toilet for seven days. We couldn't even leave our home for four days, due to the road condition. We had four cars stuck, two in the ditch right in front of our house. We helped out some people who took comfort in our home until a family member came to get them. The tow company wouldn't even come up here until the roads were serviced, which meant two cars sat here for two days. God forbid there was an emergency (as) no vehicles could have come to the rescue.

This is also a school bus route. I have seen many buses not being able to get up the hill or down; one sat for 1

1/2hours until they (Public Works staff) finally came. Then there is not being able to get to work, my husband lost three days in the ice storm due to the road condition. I have missed many.

We hope this gets looked into.

E. Noga, Halton Hills

Ice storm survivor says thanks

Dear editor,

I would like to thank the many people who worked tirelessly to get our power supply working after that huge ice storm.

Living in the country I was without power for six days. I have heard that there were people who didn't have their power for longer than that! It is amazing how someone can adapt to that situation when needed! The hydro crew working in my area were from Ottawa and they gave up Christmas with their families to help. It doesn't matter if they made extra money for doing this, their loss of family time can't be counted in dollars! THANKS GUYS!

To the firemen who cut trees and branches off roads to make them passable— THANK YOU!

To Mayor Rick Bonnette who kept so many people informed as to what was being done and helped in any way he

could— THANK YOU!

To the police who were called to many "fender-benders" due to ice on the roads and traffic lights not working and helping with anything else that came their way— THANK YOU!

To the people who opened their doors to friends, family and neighbours who were stranded in their cold homes— THANK YOU! (In my case, to Mr. Foster, a neighbour, who checked on homes along my road to make sure everyone was okay— THANK YOU!) To so many people I am not aware of for helping in any way they could— THANK YOU!

To the complainers— you chose to live in this climate so learn to deal with it. Both the good and the bad! When the sun shone, to be able to see millions of diamond-like sparkles on the trees, fences and in the fields - an awesome sight! What a beautiful world we live in and Halton Hills is a wonderful place!

Margaret Renton, Halton Hills

Letters policy

Letters must include the author's name, address and daytime phone number. Anonymous letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 150 words and may be edited for content and/or length. Publication is not guaranteed.

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