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COUNCIL

TOWN PUSHES FOR ACTION ON PROVINCIAL COURT BACKLOG

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With pandemic-related delays continuing to plague the Ontario court system, Halton Hills is calling on the chief justice to address the situation.

During its most recent meeting, town council passed a motion that asks Chief Justice Lise Maisonneuve to "quickly resolve the lack of judicial resources in the Provincial Offences Act courts to allow for important hearings to be scheduled and heard in a timely manner to allow for fast resolution of serious matters."

The motion from Coun. Clark Somerville notes that 276 Halton Hills parking infraction notices are

awaiting trial and expected to be cancelled due to delays, which will result in "significant revenue loss to the Town."

"It's not just the revenue from it — it's also the issue of fairness," said Somerville. "Everyone is entitled to a day in court if they wish to have one."

Provincial courts were closed for months due to the pandemic, with the Ontario Court of Justice recently approving the continuation of a reduced operating schedule that began March 16, 2020.

According to the resolu-

tion, the courts have indicated that parking trials will not resume until in-person hearings can recommence, which isn't anticipated for another full year.

"It's unacceptable and I'm glad we're raising the issue," said motion seconder Coun. Jane Fogal, noting the court system needs to better adapt to the realities of the pandemic's continuation.

The motion will be forwarded to Maisonneuve, Premier Doug Ford, MPP Ted Arnott, the Small Urban GTHA Mayors and the local municipalities.

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