

COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT KEY FOR TOWN: BONNETTE

MAYOR DISCUSSES PRIORITIES AT ANNUAL LUNCHEON

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Halton Hills needs to continue to attract industrial and commercial development, Mayor Rick Bonnette told the local chamber of commerce at his annual state of the town luncheon.

"A noticeable portion of town's budget is paid for with the taxes collected from commercial and industrial. The town's capital program also relies on non-residential growth," he said. "The focus on attracting has the benefit of improving the town's residential to non-residential (tax) ratio, putting the town in a better economic and finan-

cial position."

Bonnette said to help achieve that goal, the town launched the business concierge program in March. Its purpose was to streamline the process for businesses interested in coming to Halton Hills, assisting them with getting the necessary information and helping guide them through the approval process.

He said the program has assisted 27 businesses which could result in as much as \$ billion in investment in the town. He said the town is focusing on four sectors: advanced manufacturing, food and beverage processing, clean technology and agribusiness.

"Our goal is to stay competitive. We need to be competitive, we need to maintain open for business approach, to grow non-residential assessment and



Metroland file photo
Rick Bonnette recently held his annual mayor's luncheon, where he shared his outlook for the coming year.

attract jobs."

Clean technology is of particular interest to the town after council commit-

ted to achieve net neutral emissions by 2030.

"Those focused on clean technology will help us reach our ambitious goal by attracting and growing this sector so that research and development services and progress jobs needed for this transition to net zero will keep the dollars right here in this community," Bonnette said.

Other points Bonnette touched on included:

- Continuing to support and help businesses recover from the pandemic: He said programs like Digital Main Street, helping businesses improve their online presence, and Art-preneur Halton Hills have been well received.

- Supporting arts and culture: "People want to set up business where there's a good quality of life. We're focused on making Halton Hills a top-of-the-line com-

munity to live, work, play and, more importantly, invest." Bonnette pointed to the recent Culture Days offerings in town as a sign of a thriving arts and culture community.

- Shopping local: "It doesn't take much for us to help a small business recover," Bonnette said. "All we have to do is shop local. He reminded everyone that local businesses employ Halton Hills residents, pay taxes to the town and support minor sports, local charities and events.

- McGibbon development: Bonnette said it was great to see Amico revitalize the condo project. The downtown Georgetown project will be 10 stories high with 169 units, at a lower cost than the original project that called for 125. "There will be some pain during the construction, but once it is completed, it

will make downtown Georgetown even more vibrant than it is today, for many years to come," Bonnette said.

- Affordable housing: Bonnette expects site approval soon for the old ambulance building at 17 Guelph St., which will see 14 affordable housing units created.

- Expansion of the urban boundaries: Bonnette said the expansion was needed in order to accommodate a new hospital in the future. The mayor says he envisions a medical hub with businesses to support the hospital.

"We have made important progress," Bonnette said in closing. "Much more remains to be done, but I'm confident we will keep moving forward toward a stronger, diversified and more resilient economy."

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