

Georgetown wastewater plant receives Environment Canada award

By Wendy Long

Think quick: what's the closest climate station in Halton? If you said the Georgetown Wastewater Treatment Plant, you're absolutely correct.

Monday morning the employees of Georgetown's Wastewater Treatment Plant (located on 9th Line just south of Hungry Hollow), received the Morley K. Thomas honor from Environment Canada in appreciation of 30 years of weather observing in Canada.

Unbeknownst to many, the Georgetown plant has been faithfully recording daily maximum and minimum temperatures and precipitation readings for years. It is the only location in Halton Hills to do so, said Philip Raczynski, a meteorological inspector for Environment Canada.

The plant's operations staff takes the readings morning and night seven days a week. They record the figures on a climatological station report, provided by Environment Canada, and send the figures off to the Ontario Climate Centre in Toronto. The weather equipment itself is owned and provided by Environment Canada, which compiles statistics for a myriad of pur-

poses.

In Georgetown, this is achieved by a rain gauge and Stevenson screen containing two thermometers, for maximum and minimum readings.

In 1962, the Georgetown, Fergus and Waterloo wastewater plants all began to collect this weather information. At that point, all the plants were operated by the Ministry of the Environment. There are now about 350 climate stations spread throughout Ontario.

Raczynski added that the information is valuable to both parties as precipitation affects flow rates at the wastewater plants.

"It doesn't cost the Region anything dollarwise or financially to do the work," said Ted Curtis, operations supervisor at both the Georgetown and Acton plants. (Wastewater plants in Halton are a Region of Halton responsibility.) Curtis explained that the Town of Halton Hills has called him on numerous occasions for the climate data, for purposes which range from urban planning to insurance claims to court cases.

"We're one of the plants that have the most stringent effluent guidelines in the province," Curtis

emphasized.

Since 1987, the Georgetown Wastewater Treatment Plant has been undergoing improvements costing somewhere in the range of

\$14 million. They have added sophisticated new processes.

"The Morley K. Thomas award is a one-time shot," said Raczynski, as the award is strictly for recognizing

30 years. Morley K. Thomas is a former Director General of the Canadian Climate Centre and was a climate volunteer for 35 years.

Continued on page 2



The Georgetown Wastewater Treatment Plant received a Morley K. Thomas award Monday morning from Environment Canada, honoring the plant's 30 years of weather observation. From left: Operations staff Reid MacKay, Glenn Castle, Pete Adams, plant Operations Supervisor Ted Curtis, Environment Canada Meteorological Inspector Philip Raczynski, and operations staff Doug Jarvie, Kyle Cribar and Brian Amphlett. Photo by Wendy Long.

Halton Hills

THIS WEEK

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Council balks at Dominion Seed proposal for temporary seniors' facility

By Dianne Cornish

The Town of Halton Hills doesn't have enough money to support a \$35,000-a-year lease proposal over the next five years for a temporary seniors' centre on the Dominion Seed House property. That was the gist of sentiments expressed by town councillors Monday night at a special budget meeting. The session closed with council recommending that \$22,000 be put in the town's 1993 budget to help establish a temporary seniors' recreational facility in Georgetown.

The proposed budget also includes \$32,000 to pay for renovations at the former Acton firehall so it can be used as a centre for Acton seniors.

Councillor Gail Rutherford opened the debate saying that although she believes there's a need for a seniors' centre in Georgetown, "unfortunately, we don't have the money (for the Dominion Seed plan)." Rutherford argued that Seed House owners have everything to gain from a temporary facility on their site,

especially since it has been proposed that a full year's rent be paid up front and a five-year lease be guaranteed. At the end of the five years, Dominion Seed will have "a lovely facility, largely because of the town."

Rutherford suggested that the town get something in return for its money, including a five-acre recreational area on the site featuring an oval skating rink, bandshell and public washrooms, all built at the expense of Dominion Seed property owners. Later in the debate, she withdrew her suggestion.

Councillors Rob Heaton, Anne Currie and Gerald Rennie were among those who argued that the town cannot afford \$175,000 over five years to cover leasing costs. Heaton argued costs will be double that when money for a coordinator and utilities are factored in.

"No one knows better than seniors that you cannot have everything," Currie remarked. She said seniors know that money has to be taken from some other project to support costs associated with a seniors' facility. The \$22,000 rec-

ommended for the seniors this year was taken from a proposed \$75,000 allocation to fight the possible siting of a Peel landfill on the eastern border of Halton Hills.

"I have a lot of difficulty putting \$175,000 into a building and getting nothing in return," Rennie said of the Dominion Seed proposal. He suggested that the offer by Sacre Coeur Church to lease its hall for a temporary seniors' centre at \$8,000 a year was something for Georgetown seniors to re-consider.

The town has allocated funds in its capital forecast budget for a permanent seniors' facility to be built in 1999 in conjunction with an expansion of the Gordon Alcott Arena. Councillor Rutherford and others indicated they favor the Alcott proposal because monies would be invested in a town-owned facility rather than leasing costs.

Councillor Kathy Gastle said town seniors aren't "comfortable" with the Alcott location. The town could save money by leasing because it wouldn't have to cover capital expenditures associated

with a town-owned facility, she argued.

Councillor Ron Chatten suggested that the town and seniors

"should be working together" to come up with a facility that will satisfy the majority of people involved.

CVCA prosecution

The Credit Valley Conservation Authority successfully prosecuted an Erin Township couple and a local contractor for the destruction of three acres of Provincially Significant Class 1 wetland known as the Alton-Hillsburgh complex.

All vegetation had been clear-cut last February and two roads had been constructed to facilitate the excavation of the site. Naturally occurring peat was being extracted and trucked off the site for future commercial use and excavation pits had filled with groundwater.

Both defendants pleaded guilty and Justice of the Peace B. Marko ordered the removal of the roads, the placement of peat (stockpiled on the site) back into the excavation pits and the re-vegetation of the site. In addition, the contractor was fined \$1,000, the maximum allowable under the Conservation Authorities Act.

"This is a significant case in that the Conservation Authority was able to obtain the rehabilitation of the site through Section 72 of the Provincial Offences Act," says Community Relations spokesperson Robert Peace.

"The Ministry of Natural Resources, although informed of the situation, was not able to do anything under the new Wetlands Policy Statement," says Peace. The Authority had to use its regulation which is better able to protect wetlands and other significant areas from certain types of work. The new Wetland Policy Statement is enacted through the Planning Act and since this project did not require a planning application they could not pursue it."

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