

Ontario Municipal Board urges cooperation on Acton development issue

By Oksana Buhel

Even the Ontario Municipal Board is awaiting the results of the fish habitat and wastewater treatment plant audit study before approving residential development in Acton, but it does not intend to wait for the estimated two-year period.

"We were able to take all the provided information, examine it and give you our conclusion in less than 48 hours," J.R. Mills, chair of the OMB, pointed out Friday. He advised Halton Region to act in a similar prompt fashion. Previously, the region indicated the required studies would take two years, but Mills pointed out the studies could be completed in three seasons.

The Board approved the extension of Acton's boundary, to include Rinarin, Coscan, Bond-Arch and Sprowl lands, adding specific agreements should be reached with individual developers. Within these

Acton East lands, Mills recommended two school sites be maintained until it was definitely determined the Halton Board of Education does not require a site.

Development in the Acton urban area, namely Blackhawk Leather and Dawkin's lands, was the only area where the Board's views varied with the Town's (as outlined in the Town's official plan amendments released in June). Mills recommended only a portion of the Dawkin's land be designated low-density residential, and the portion of the land adjacent to the Blackhawk lands remain industrial.

He added redesignation of the Blackhawk lands would be premature.

"Blackhawk is a very successful employer in Acton," Mills pointed out. "It (the property) shouldn't be redesignated until Blackhawk ceases to exist."

With respect to Acton's southwest Goose lands, the

Board recommended the urban boundary be extended to include a ring road, linking residential units separated by an environmentally sensitive area, which cannot be developed. The Board, however, did not approve 18 proposed housing units on the west side of the ring road, which would require a further extension of the boundary.

Mills recommended all agencies, including the Town, Halton Region, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Ministry of Energy and Environment, Ministry of Natural Resources and Credit Valley Conservation Authority, work together on the required studies.

The Board will hold a pre-hearing conference in January, to monitor the progression of the studies. Three weeks have been set aside in April to discuss commercial macro development in Acton.

Regional and municipal

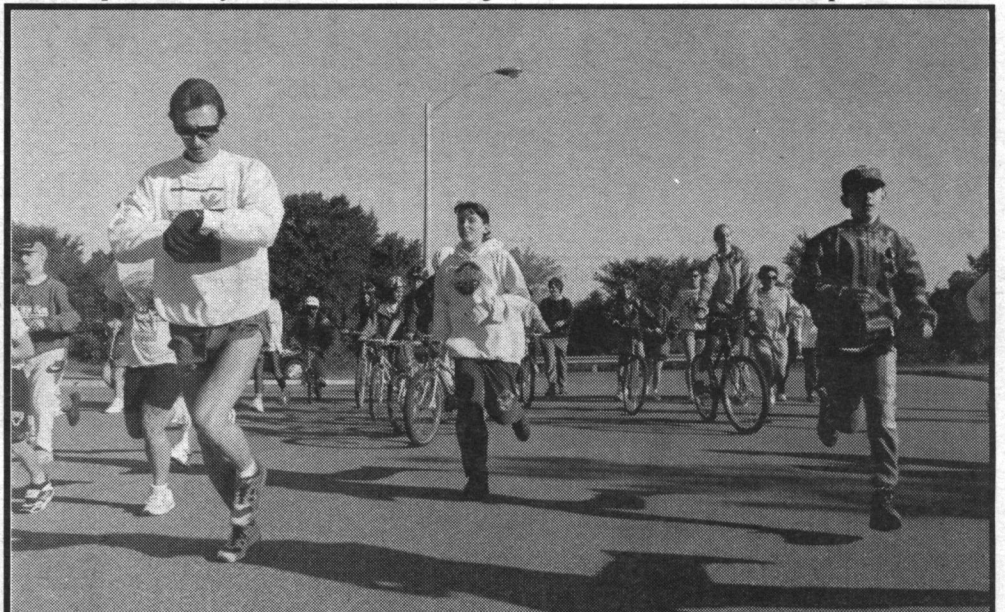
councillor Marilyn Serjeantson was impressed with the Board's recommendations. The Board gave directions which will be followed up on," Serjeantson

said. "That's what we need."

Acton councillor Norm Elliot was impressed with the "very strong message to the involved agencies to act

quickly."

Town solicitor Roger Beaman also praised the Board's recommendations which "basically approve Halton Hills' position."



On your mark! Set! Go! Dozens of people showed up last Sunday at the Town of Halton Hills Civic Centre in Georgetown to run, walk and cycle for the Terry Fox Run, to raise money for the Canadian Cancer Society. It was estimated over \$900,000 was raised province-wide in this year's 13th annual run.

photo by Simon Wilson/HHTW

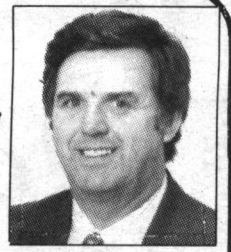
Halton Hills

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Vol. 2, No. 13 Wednesday, September 22, 1993 32 pages

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Chamber claims Turner press conference not an "election ploy"

By Oksana Buhel

The Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce (HHCC) called a press conference Monday to clarify the point that Halton-Peel M.P. Garth Turner's

Sept. 13 press conference was not called for election-motivated purposes, but at the request of the Chamber.

"The request for a press conference was made before

the election was called," Turner, who was in attendance at Monday's conference, pointed out.

Bob Malcolmson, president of HHCC said the Chamber's

perception, "and I reiterate perception," prior to an Aug. 31 meeting between Chamber officials and Turner, was that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) was the only roadblock in the way of Acton development. During the meeting, Turner called the DFO and spoke with Minister Ross Reid's aide, who stated DFO approval of development had already been granted.

Turner said after he was made privy to this information, he asked Reid to put the DFO's position in writing, and the result was the memo revealed at the Sept. 13 press conference, dated July 6. Turner added he received this DFO internal memo Sept. 10.

"I took the extraordinary step of releasing an internal memo," Turner stated.

Turner then admitted despite the issuance of the memo, "there is no exception to legislation."

Chamber vice-president Walt Dixon praised Turner's efforts, adding it was deplorable Turner was being accused of hunting for votes.



Garth Turner

"He got his butt kicked for helping the Chamber of Commerce and the people of his constituency," Dixon insisted.

The blame has now been shifted to the Ministry of Energy and the Environment (MOEE), which, according to Malcolmson, has "switched its position (regarding the granting of permits to take water) at least six times."

"How many times can the provincial government flip flop on an issue?" Malcolmson demanded.

He added a meeting will be organized in the near future between the Chamber and

Halton North M.P.P., Noel Duignan, to clarify the position of the provincial government.

The issue of liability, which seems to be the greatest concern of the MOEE and municipal and regional councillors, was referred to by Malcolmson as "smoke and mirrors." Turner insisted he was "completely comfortable" there will be no charges laid by the DFO against Halton Hills in regards Acton development.

Others are not so comfortable. Wes Lammers, special projects co-ordinator of the Ministry of Energy and the Environment, said the focus of the development situation in Acton has changed and he doesn't "want to get involved in a big political issue."

Benson Leung, manager of special studies and research for Halton Region, also said he would not be commenting on the situation any further. "It has turned into a political issue, and I would feel more comfortable if regional elected representatives comment on it," Leung said.



Three-year-old Jordan Stephan of Guelph sure was merry as he went around on the merry-go-round last Saturday at the Acton Fall Fair held at Prospect Park.

photo by Simon Wilson/HHTW

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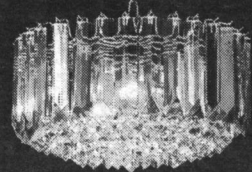


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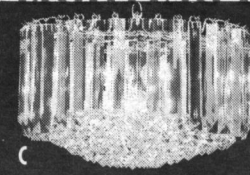
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