

Still no decision on Eden Mills bridge

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Rockwood Miller

The future of the aging bowstring bridge in Eden Mills remains up the air as Township Council gathers more information on controversial rehabilitation, reconstruction and replacement options.

Although Council agreed to wait until next month for an overdue report from an ad hoc committee studying the options, it also served notice that it may decide what to do with the bridge on Monday, Aug. 8, with or without the committee's report.

In an informal meeting before Council on Monday night Reeve Leverne Harris said they deferred

a decision on the bridge because Council doesn't want to be accused of making a decision without all the facts.

"We need information on the financial responsibility of the committee and the associated costs of each option and the liability and safety issues."

In 1990, when it was designated a heritage structure, Wellington County turned over responsibility for the bridge to Eramosa.

"Since that time the bridge has continued to deteriorate and there have been two studies done that recommend its replacement or immediate repair," Harris said.

Safety concerns have forced

officials to reduce the weight of vehicles using the 80-year-old bridge to 10 tonnes but Harris said they can't police the heavier vehicles regularly using the structure.

Although there are no firm figures on any of the options Harris says it could cost \$400,000 to repair the bridge and approximately \$225,000 to replace it.

"What I've always said is that if we replace the bridge we get one that will last twice as long, be twice as safe for half the price."

Harris said that people don't appreciate that if the bridge stays as a single-lane structure, taxpayers will continue to foot the bill for the upkeep of the bridge and for

former County Road 28.

"If it is a two-lane structure than Wellington County will look after it but if it is single-lane than Eramosa taxpayers must carry the cost of upkeep."

Village residents appear to support rehabilitating the existing single-lane structure.

"The most important reason for keeping it a single-lane facility is safety," said Eden Mills resident Michael Keefer.

"There are lots of kids in that village and there is scientific evidence that widening the bridge and road would give us faster and more traffic and that it would be dangerous."

Coming events!

There's still lots to do in and around the village, so get out those calendars, Rockwood!

July 21, Thursday — 8 pm: Grand Opening of Rockwood and Eramosa Information Centre, 126 Main St. S.

July 25, 26, 28, 29, Monday to Friday — 9 am to 12 noon: Summer session of Babysitter Course held at Everton Community Church, for students age 11 and up. For info call Yvonne Thorn at 856-9295.

August (weekends) — 2 to 4 pm: Rockwood Theatrical Hike to begin and end at Rockwood's Old Town Hall, winding through the Conservation Area. Call 856-9891.

Aug. 16, 17, 18, Tuesday to Thursday — Make a plaster cast of your face and write a play with our guest playwright Dale Hamilton at the Eramosa Community Library. Grades 1-3. Minimal fee of \$10 covers all three days, including material. Sign up now.

Aug. 23, 24, 25, Tuesday to Thursday — Hear legends and carve a sculpture from plaster with guest native carver Harold Rice at the Eramosa Library. \$10 covers three days, including materials. Grades 4-6. Sign up at the library.

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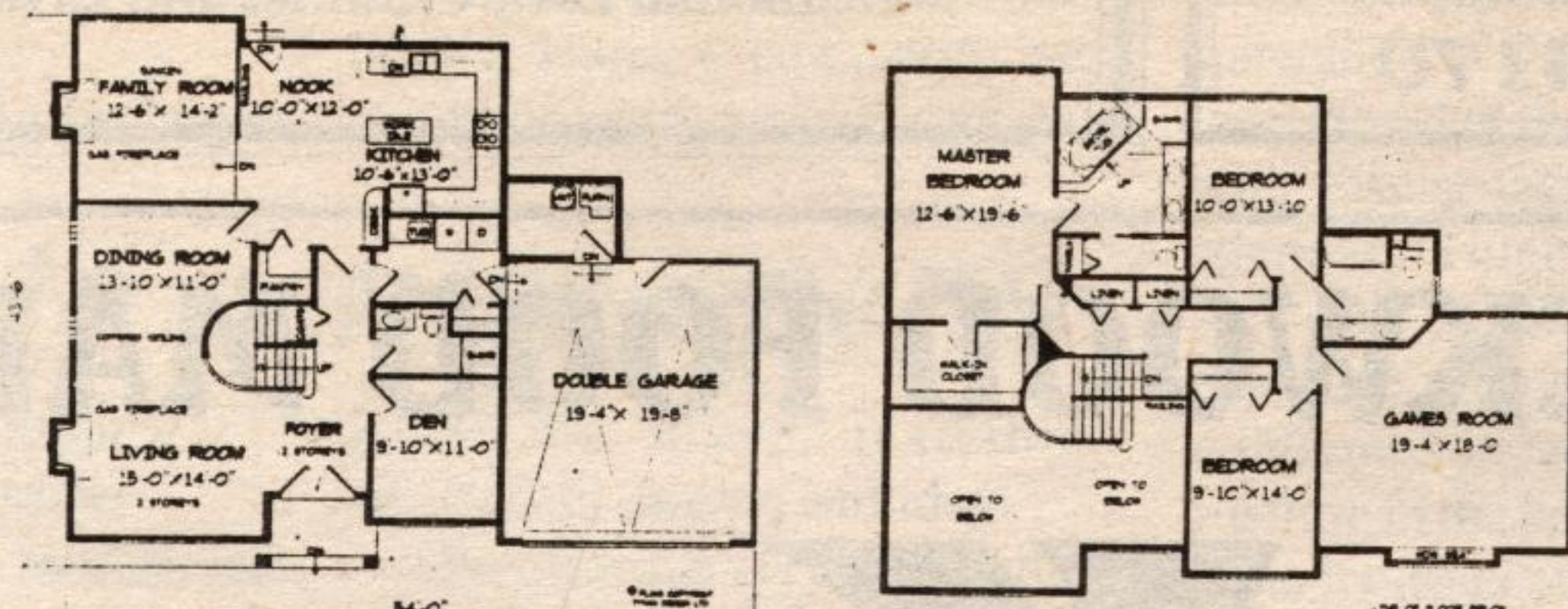
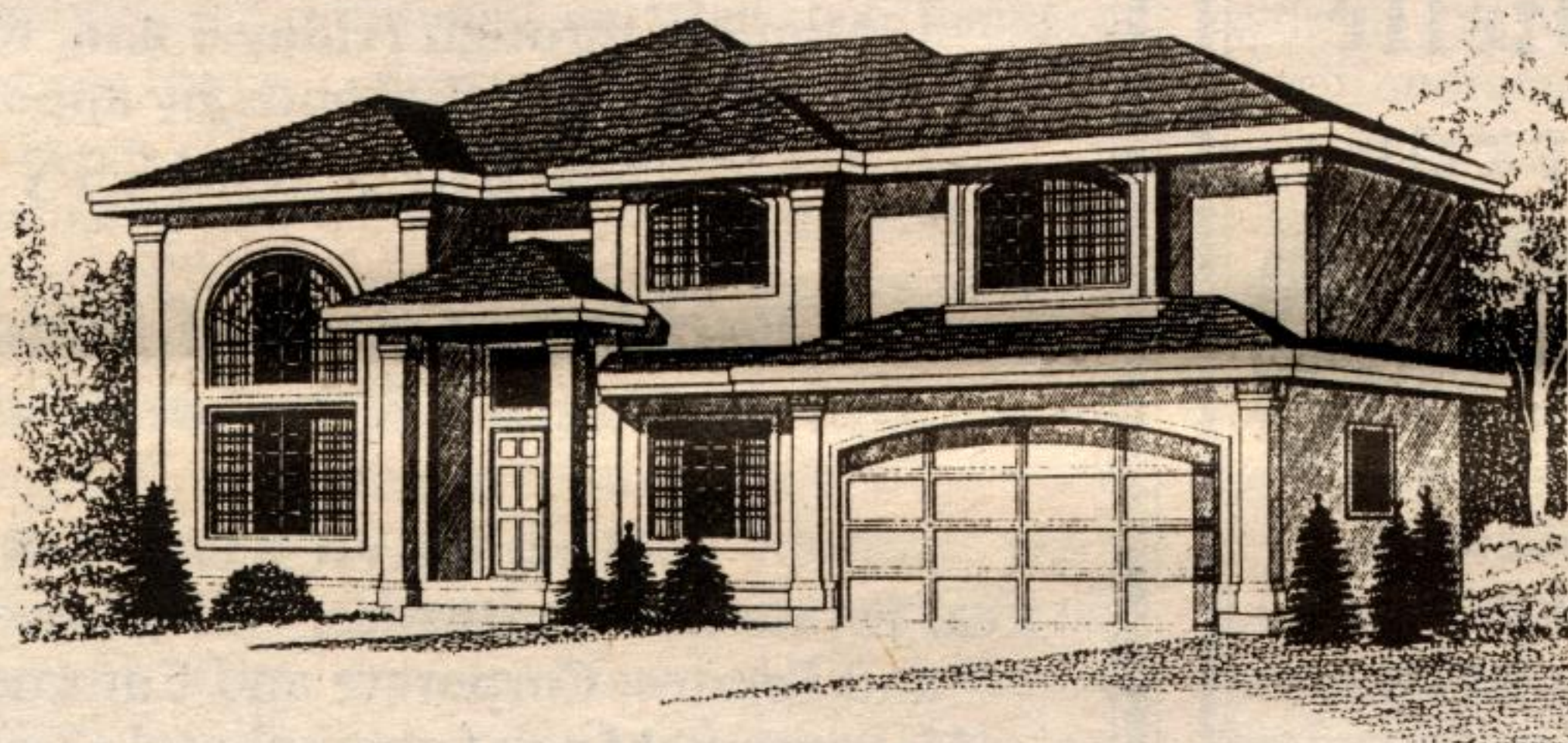
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