

# Tax increases may be avoided

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK  
The Acton Tanner

Acton rate payers may be spared a property tax increase for municipal purposes again this year.

Town councillors have whittled the proposed \$18.8 million operating budget down to reflect a .23 per cent tax increase and will attempt to make further cuts to reflect no increase at a budget meeting tomorrow (Thursday).

Heading into last week's meeting, staff reported that \$70,000 in cuts would have to be made to come in at a zero per cent increase and they recommended that three full-time staff positions, a by-law enforcement officer and secretary and a programmer in the finance department, not be filled.

After four hours of debate councillors cut one secretarial position, left one as a contract (not a full-time position), and delayed the hiring of a third for six months to save \$20,000.

One reduction to the budget was \$5,000 requested by the Acton Citizens' Band to cover taxes on its Wallace Street band hall.

Staff reported that the Band did not require its original \$10,000 grant request. Its new charitable status allows it to almost certainly get a property tax exemption.

Acton Councillor Norm Elliott said he still has a concern about the Band's future and the proposed affiliation with the Town's Recreation and Parks department.

"Town funding has to continue for the Band if it wants to enjoy this new tax-free status.

"Every year we go through this hassle about whether they get a grant and what amount it should be. It gets to the point when everybody detests the debate," Elliott

## Spending criticized

One Acton resident, who signed herself "a disgruntled taxpayer" wrote to the budget committee, urging councillors to not spend money on items like new chairs for the Mayor's officer and an information kiosk.

In her letter, Cobblehill homeowner Frances Humphrey said Council should spend taxpayers' money as carefully as they spend their own.

Humphrey complained that not enough money was being spent by the Town to maintain Acton's streets, to encourage more retail growth and to improve the look of the "dingy" downtown.

"They are not spending money on fixing the potholes in Acton, but are spending in other areas of the town," Humphrey said in an interview on Monday.

"Council needs to spend money to encourage building owners to clean up their shabby properties on Mill Street; never mind spending money on plants and signs.

"Who would want to rent on Mill Street? It's a disgrace," Humphrey said.

Humphrey added that as a senior citizen on a fixed income, she is not willing to pay more taxes to improve the look of the town.

said as he argued that the affiliation question has to be examined.

Councillors were also told to expect a report from the Director of Recreation and Parks concerning a policy of consistent funding for all Town recreation groups.

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The future of the Town library system will be investigated, thanks to the budget committee's approval of \$25,000 for a master plan.

In urging fellow councillors to approve the expenditure, mainly to be paid from development charges, Library Board member, Councillor Norm Elliott described the master plan as "crucial."

"We need this study to determine what will happen when the future growth occurs and the existing facilities aren't adequate."

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One of the three positions that escaped being cut was \$41,388 for a by-law enforcement officer.

Although there were suggestions from some councillors that no additional staff be hired, Councillor Norm Elliott argued that it would be false economy not to fill the badly-needed position.

"Staff come to Council with a backlog of several hundred by-law complaints and cases before the courts and now you want to drop the by-law enforcement of-

ficer and the secretary.

"Sure it is easy to say 'Lets cut to zero and be a hero' but you're not going to be a hero to those people who have a complaint that the by-law people can't get to."

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As councillors grappled with the cuts necessary for a zero per cent increase in taxes, Acton Councillor Gerald Rennie questioned whether they were really trying to set an example or just wanted some psychological comfort.

"The difference between a zero increase and what we have here now is less than one cent a day for each taxpayer," Rennie said.

"For the price of half a case of Coke a year you could fill all three of these positions."

That brought a warning from Administrator Ray King who cautioned Councillors that they have to keep fixed costs under control.

"In '96 we will have a budget year the likes of which haven't been seen for 20 years," King said.

"We will have the effects of the down-loading of Federal transfer payments to the Province and the effects of the end of the social contract in March of next year, which includes our employees who have not had a raise in three years.

"It is not just the \$2 or \$3 in this year's budget—it's looking ahead to keep our costs under control."



### VOLCANIC ERUPTION!

McKenzie-Smith student Amanda Cunneyworth, 13, stood beside an erupting volcano at the school's recent Science Fair. Part of her study included the location of volcanoes. (Doug Harrison photo)

## INFORMATION TOWN OF HALTON HILLS NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### WARD 1

QUEEN STREET EAST • CHURCHILL ROAD  
ACTON BOULEVARD

General Committee for the Town of Halton Hills will conduct a Public Meeting to examine and discuss a proposed amendment to the Halton Hills Official Plan and Acton Zoning By-law 1358 to permit two additional residential dwelling units in addition to the six units permitted on the site.

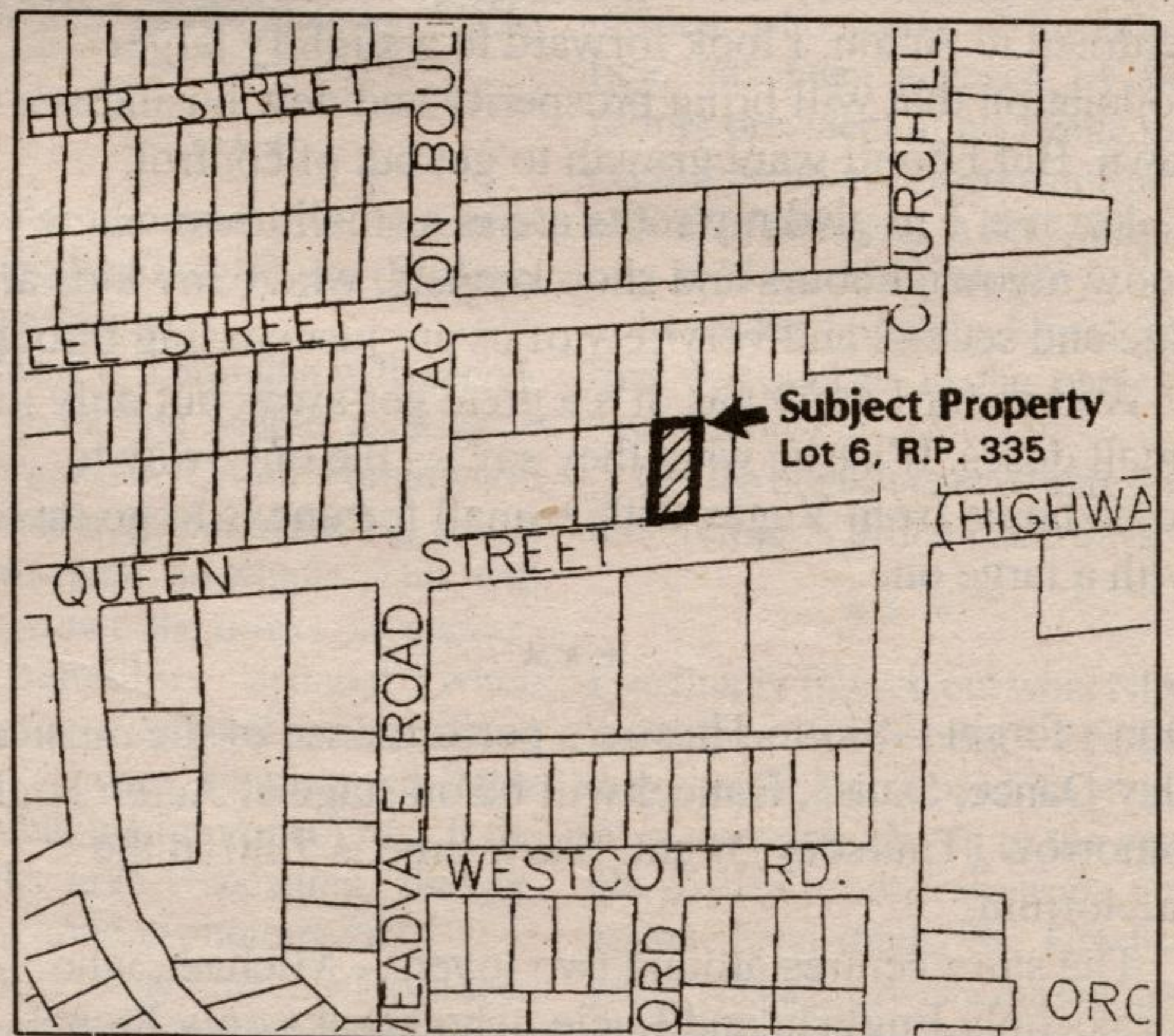
The property is located at 333 Queen St. E. in the Town of Halton Hills (Acton).

Further information is available in the Planning Department.

#### ALL INTERESTED CITIZENS ARE WELCOME

**TIME:** 7:00 pm  
**DATE:** Monday, May 1, 1995  
**LOCATION:** Council Chamber  
Halton Hills Civic Centre

**FILE NO.:** D09/MILBRAM



**Do you have a friend,  
family member or  
partner with HIV or AIDS?**

Would you like to talk about it  
with others?

**There will be an informal and  
confidential meeting in April.**

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*Cate Bannan, AIDS Program  
Halton Region Health Dept.  
(905) 825-6222  
for details*



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