

One per cent Town tax increase possible

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Acton Tanner

\$4.86. That's how much more the average Acton home owner will pay in Town taxes this year if the budget committee endorses staff's latest budget figures.

That one per cent increase would result in a \$490.81 municipal tax bill for an average home assessed at \$6,400 and although councillors were aiming for no tax increase, that may not be possible because of anticipated legal bills for the Town to continue its fight against plans to turn part of the Acton Quarry into a land fill site.

"Staff are recommending that we add \$100,000 to the budget to cover legal costs now that the quarry dump proposal has resurfaced," explained budget committee chair, Acton Councillor Rick Bonnette on Friday.

The proposed budget is \$2 million less than it was in January when the budget committee last saw it and sent it back to staff to make cuts in light of a 35.77 per cent decrease in provincial transfer payments.

Staff's proposed budget adjustments are a mix of increased revenues and spending cuts, including minor cost adjustments and personnel and service level cuts.

In his written overview, which the budget committee dealt with after press time on Tuesday, Town Treasurer Andy Koopmans said the budget adjustments don't significantly impact on the existing staff complement, but several requests for staffing change have been deleted from the budget.

Koopmans's report said there are very few noticeable service level reductions in the budget.



SIGNING UP: Seven-year-old Trisha Bingeman may be all bundled up, but she's thinking of soccer as she registers to play with the Acton Soccer Club with help from her mom Mary, left, and club members Leah Youngblut and Anne Stewart. (Eve Martin photo)

Real estate market looking up

BY KAREN WETMORE
The Acton Tanner

Though the market may not be booming, now may be an ideal time to think about buying a home.

In fact, this is the best time in the past 25 years to buy real estate, says Damian Nikic, broker/owner of Royal City Realty Halton Ltd.

"Normally, when interest rates go down, prices go up, but so far that hasn't happened yet," he says. "Rates are very low now and the prices are still low."

Carlo Raponi, controller at Baycliffe Homes, agrees the market is picking up and says his company has a good outlook for the future. Of the 21 homes in Lakeside Estates on Birchway Place, 16 have been sold in just one year.

The subdivision at Blue Springs Golf Course has had similar success, says Nikic, with eight homes

built, two more lots sold and eight lots remaining. But buyers are very choosy and even if the price is off by a few thousand dollars, they won't buy, he adds.

Nikic started selling the homes at Blue Springs, which start at \$229,000, last May.

"We did very well, considering that's high end market," he says. "If the GO train was here and there were better shopping facilities, we would probably do even better."

Nikic describes Acton as attractive to commuters who work in Mississauga or Toronto for its small-town atmosphere, where people know you by name.

Raponi agrees: "We're happy being in Acton," he says. "People in the town are very personable to us, which you don't find in a lot of small towns."

Lakeside Estates homes start at

\$159,900 and are ideal for first-time buyers and families, he adds.

With future plans for Acton to develop into a town of 10,000 people, it looks as if the real estate market may improve even more.

"I'm not saying the market's going to start booming, but I think now is the best time for people to buy a home," Nikic says.

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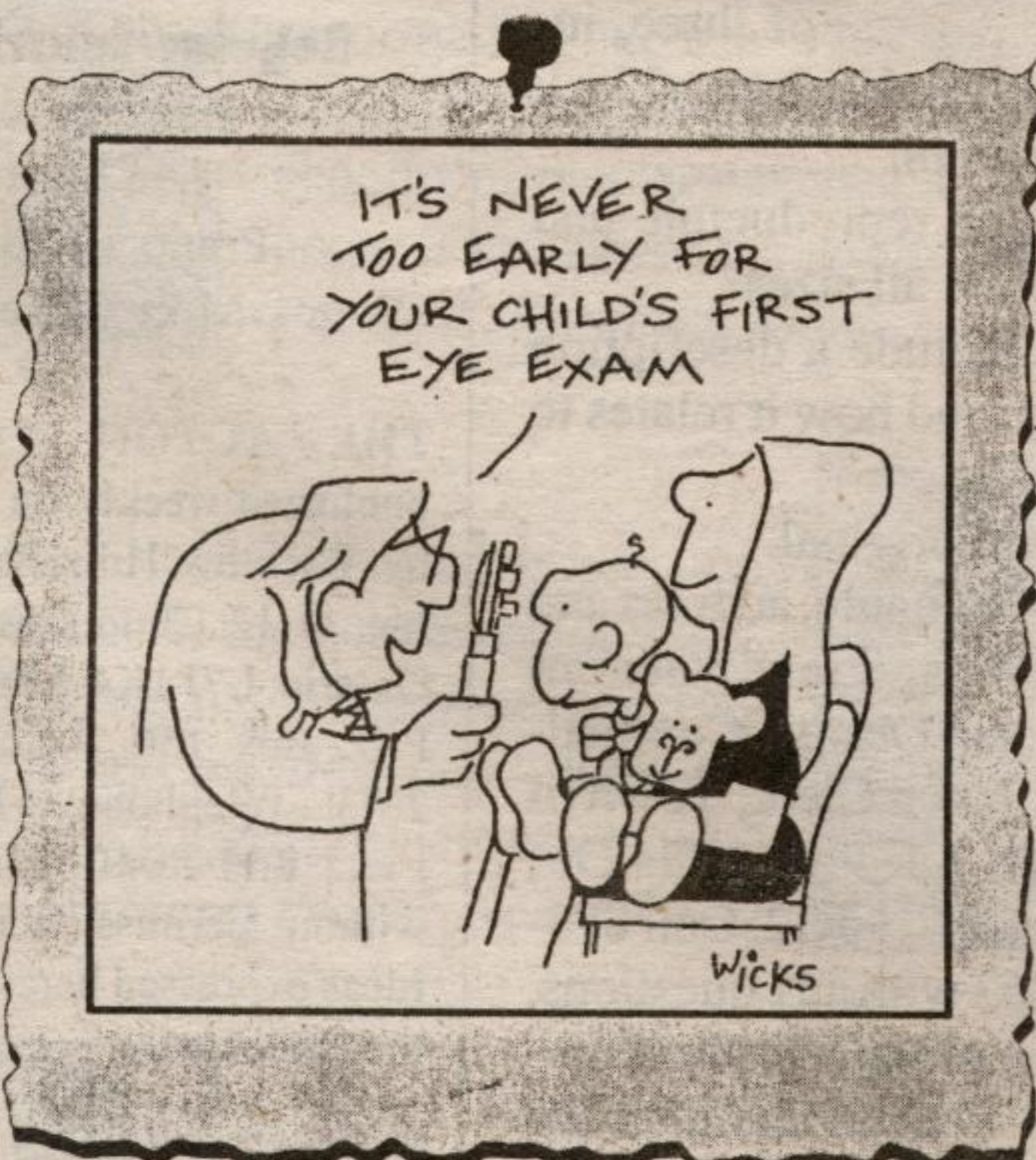
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