

People hungry for Hollow to remain house-free

by Deborah Quaile

At a public meeting held at the Halton Hills Cultural Centre on April 15, residents and concerned citizens voiced their objections to the construction of approximately 150 homes to be built in Hungry Hollow in Georgetown.

There were eight speakers at the meeting - all anti-development. April 15 was the beginning of the actual hearing with the OMB, with ten previous pre-hearings - this evening was reserved for citizen's concerns.

Many residents believe Halton Hills Village Homes and Silvercreek Estates are not addressing their environmental concerns.

So far, approximately two-thirds of the lands, formerly in the plan of subdivision, have been given to the Town of Halton Hills for open space purposes. For example, four and a half acres were used for a large neighbourhood park, and a small tot lot.

However, Bert Zonneveld, President of the Save Our Ravines (SOR) and first speaker of the evening, reiterated that residents couldn't believe their unique green space would be lost - a loss of not only quality of life, but wildlife as well.

"Should we not protect (Hungry Hollow) and help it recover?... We strongly feel (that 150 homes) are wrong for the wildlife and the river... This valley is a local treasure and nothing should be taken from it."

Residents Wayne Koning, Cathy Oman, Irv Weiss, Doug Getty, Leslie Adams, Jasmine Adams, and Wayne MacDonald also aired their views, stating they are not against development but the fact that development would take place in an environmentally sensitive area.

They pointed out other problems could arise from building in

McNiven Rd. By-law passed

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rather we get it done?" Councillor Barry Lee ended the debate saying, "I've never seen a road reconstruction that the residents didn't fight against, but each time they've been happy when it's done. I have faith in our staff and when all is said and done, the road will still have character, it will be flatter and it will be safer."

The By law was passed at Council, and the reconstruction will be done this summer.

the area, numerous other "past faux pas," as Mr. Getty remarked, that should never have happened such as previous development where the earth slid away from beneath patios and homes, and buildings shifted.

Resident Cathy Oomen restated comments from her preliminary press release as part of the SOR group statement.

"In a 1992 study on Wetlands and Impact Assessment for Test Well 15 in the Hungry Hollow Ravine, Dames and Moore found that the ravine contained 78 bird species, 10 mammal species, four amphibian and four reptile species and 323 different plants, 30 of which are regionally rare. Obviously, this is a very important wildlife refuge.

"Both the CVC and Region have recognized Hungry Hollow as an Environmentally Sensitive Area. As a result, the Town Council resolved that TEAC (Town Environmental Advisory Committee) investigate the possibility of designating Hungry Hollow as a Natural Heritage Area. Even the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation noted that Hungry Hollow has the potential for archaeological resources. It is known that the Ojibwa natives visited the area in autumn for the salmon run.

"TEAC very strongly stated that it favoured no impingement on the valley lands or impact from development. It felt that the ravine, a unique ecological corridor, had already suffered extreme damage from surrounding expansion. Erosion and tree impact on heritage trees will be significant."

Mr. MacDonald concluded that he, as well as many others in the Cultural Centre that night, strongly believed in the preservation of wildlife. Hungry Hollow is a unique thumbprint of Georgetown, and the "slow methodical compression factor" in the name of expansion should not continue just for expansion's sake.

Mayor Kathy Gastle commented that regarding the Town of Halton Hills concerns, "Council, staff and residents worked closely together to ensure that over 300 acres of Hungry Hollow Valley lands were acquired for public own-

ership, and further that all environmental concerns were addressed during this process.

"The OMB hearing officer was assured that Halton Hills staff and the Credit Valley Conservation will continue to monitor the sub-division agreement as agreed upon by council.

"Since 1993, council has approved capital dollars to develop a Hungry Hollow Master Plan, for this beautiful valley."

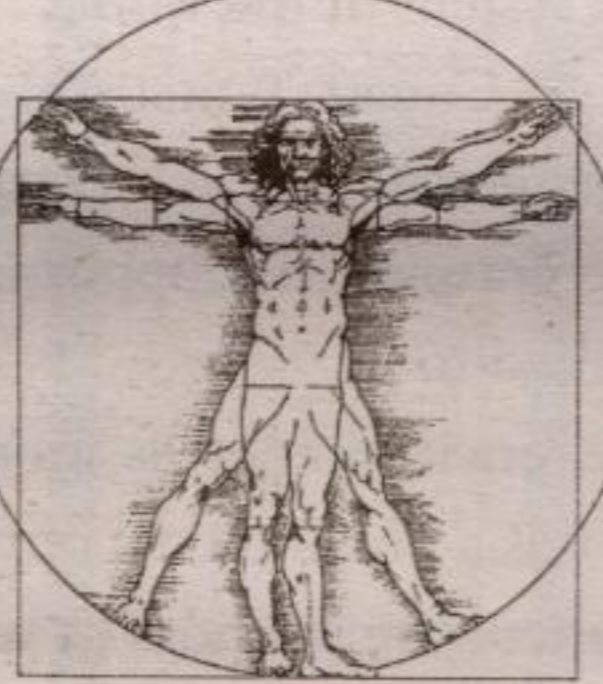
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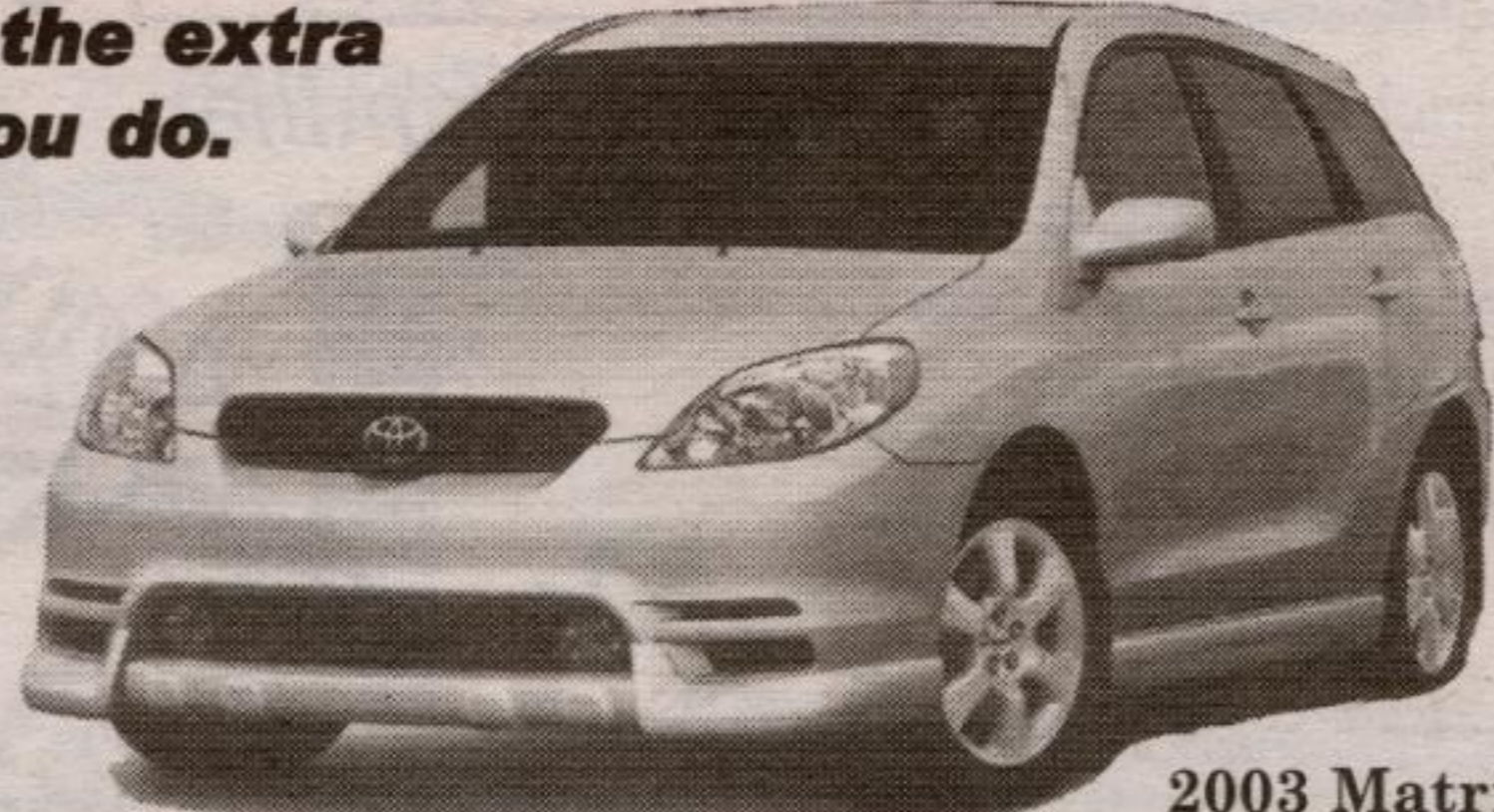
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