

Councillor Lunau's conflict over Mohawk raises concerns

BY GLORIA HILDEBRANDT

Cindy Lunau, Milton's Ward 3 councillor, declared a pecuniary conflict of interest in the application for an expansion to Mohawk Raceway. This has caused some concern among residents.

"I'm disappointed that Cindy can't represent us on this major issue," says Linda Cavan, a resident of Moffat. "It needs to be taken very seriously. A 10-storey hotel without Town water is a big concern. Congestion and especially water are big issues. I feel very strongly about it. And Cindy's not there to represent us."

Rick Matchett, a candidate for Ward 3, agrees. "It's unfortunate for the voters that Cindy feels she is in a conflict of interest on this issue. If I were a voter, I wouldn't feel she could properly represent me on this important issue."

Ms. Lunau has declared a conflict of interest because her daughter works as a server at Slots on the Mohawk property. According to The Municipal Act, a child's pecuniary interest is considered to be also the pecuniary interest of the parent. Legal opinion that was obtained independently by Ms. Lunau confirms this, she explains.

"Declaration of conflict is a personal decision, but one I take very seriously," says Ms. Lunau. "I think it is important to know when someone has a personal interest in a council, or any government, decision. An elected position should not be used for personal gain. Perception, as well as fact, is vital for maintaining the public's trust." Ms. Lunau's conflict means that Ward 3 has only two representatives on Milton's council, Ken Keates and Barry Lee, to represent them on the Mohawk development issue. This worries some area residents.

"Constituents in Milton have totally different concerns than those in Campbellville," says

Mr. Matchett. "It's important for residents to have representatives to speak on their behalf. If one representative has a conflict of interest on a key issue like this, we don't have proper representation."

Mr. Lee has more confidence in council. "The public can be assured that we're all attentive to what's occurring," he says. "Even our urban colleagues. Issues of water supply and sewage disposal have to be scrutinized very carefully. As well, there are other concerns, of traffic, the overpass at the 401 and the impact on Campbellville. All of council is involved in this."

Ms. Lunau elaborates on the July 28 council meeting when the Mohawk application was discussed. "Council's vote was unanimous and only approved moving this application to a technical report. One vote at this stage made no difference. This public meeting was the first opportunity for residents to be heard, and their input will continue to be formally recorded."

Mr. Lee makes the same point. "The public meeting was only the beginning of the process. We're getting letters from the public now, and we are all copied with correspondence from residents."

Ms. Lunau suggests that residents' anxiety is premature. "No councillor spoke for or against the application. Even without a conflict, I would be reluctant to take a position until the experts give their considered opinions on various aspects, especially water, treatment of waste water, traffic, the impact on Campbellville and the economic impact on the horse industry. The actual vote on the expansion is many months, perhaps years, in the future."

"Not much will happen before the election," points out Mr. Matchett. "It will certainly be an issue in the next three years.

We need to have strong people on council." His own view on the expansion is that the hotel could benefit the area if it is handled properly. "It will be good if the area gets compensation like road improvements, increased policing and traffic control," he adds. "If Woodbine Entertainment Group gets involved in the financing of bringing Town water to the area, Campbellville will benefit."

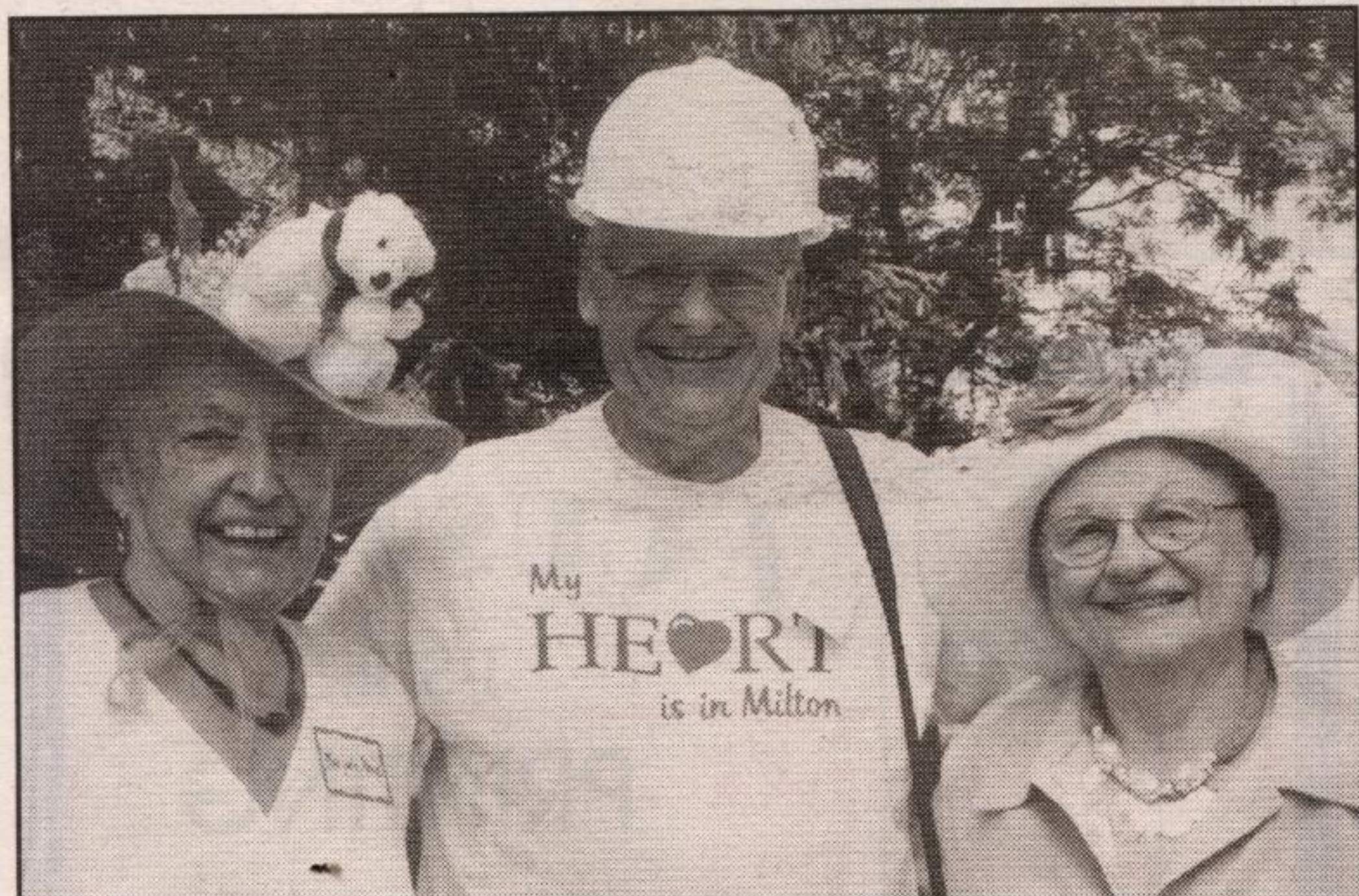
Mr. Lee believes that Mohawk Raceway has made a contribution to the area, improving the horse industry and providing additional markets for hay farmers. However, he adds that there are several sides to the issue.

Ms. Lunau's conflict of interest may not be permanent. She explains that her daughter's job is not a lifelong career and that circumstances may change. She also appears to be reconsidering the relation between her daughter's place of employment and the application itself. "The expansion application at Mohawk would not involve any changes to the Slots area," she notes. "Any expansion to the gaming facility would require a change in provincial gaming policies. Therefore, it could be interpreted that employees of the Ontario Lottery Corporation may not have an interest in this application."

Some people are wondering whether Ms. Lunau is more committed to wild turtles than she is to her voting constituents. She is interested in posting signs where turtles cross the road to lay eggs. "Turtles are at risk," she explains, "but so are drivers who may swerve to avoid them. If we don't care for the smallest, most defenceless in our environment, who will? We have imposed our lives on their habitat."

As for the larger habitat that would be permanently altered by the expansion to Mohawk Raceway, she has no opinion yet. "It is very much in my nature to be involved in the community, and I hope to be very much a part of the debate when it counts," she says.

"Until then, I'll listen and learn."



Hats off to the Millennium Community Residences

BY DONNA DANIELLI

Milton Millennium Community Residences Chairman, Karl Reichert, donned his hard hat to celebrate the expected fall completion of the non-profit assisted living facility. A fancy hat contest was part of the afternoon's festivities, and Shirley Powrys (left) and Audrea Lear-Costigan (right) were amongst the many women who took part.



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