

Honour loved one with a tree

By **FRANCES NIBLOCK**
The New Tanner

The Rotary Club of Acton is preparing for another spring planting of memorial trees at the Elizabeth Drive Park by accepting applications from people who want to honour a loved one with a living tribute.

Last spring the Rotary Club planted 14 trees which had been "purchased" for \$300 each by people who wanted a memorial for a family member or friend who had died.

Rotary member Doug Fread said the idea grew from his wife's desire to do some-

thing in memory of her mother who died.

"I thought well, we've got Rotary Park and it needs lots of trees so we planted a bunch of trees in the spring and will plant again this spring and put another plaque of memorial names on the stone marker," Fread explained in a recent interview.

"Hopefully we can keep this program until all the trees that are needed in the park are planted," Fread said.

The Town's master plan for the park shows that between 75 to 80 trees are needed in the Elizabeth Drive park which was

"adopted" by the Rotary Club of Acton in 1988. A phased development plan was established and initial work by the Town and Rotary Club included sharing the cost of installing a granular pathway system and development of the soccer field.

In the past staff have applauded the Rotary initiatives in Acton to as essential to help the Town provide high quality public parks and open space, particularly during a period of scarce resources.

For more information about the Rotary Club's memorial tree planting program call Doug Fread at 853-0239.



LIVING TRIBUTES: The Rotary Club of Acton is once again taking applications from people who would like to purchase a tree to be planted in memory of a loved one in the Rotary Park on Elizabeth Drive. -Frances Niblock photo

Town gets some good tax news from Queen's Park

By **FRANCES NIBLOCK**
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A couple of tax related announcements from the province last week were "relatively good news" for Halton Hills - especially for those who own commercial or industrial properties and those who rent business space in the downtown core.

Halton Hills Treasurer Andy Koopmans explained that when the Province first proposed moving to a uniform education rate for commercial and industrial properties it would have resulted in one rate that would have applied across the province.

By applying one rate to recover the same amount of education tax dollars in the province it meant that the taxes paid by commercial and industrial properties outside of Toronto were going to go up substantially and Toronto's taxes were going to go down substantially.

"The Province moved away from that and instead said that they would freeze the tax rate so that commercial and industrial properties in a municipality won't pay more than they did in 1997," Koopmans explained, adding that the province also said it still intends to look at a uniform rate.

Koopmans said the Town had not determined how much more it would have paid under a uniform rate, waiting instead to see what the final announcement would be.

The other change is good news for tenants of commercial properties in the down-

town core who could have lost their say in the running of the Business Improvement Area (BIA), a mandatory organization into which core area businesses must pay into to help promote and beautify the downtown area.

Acton Business Improvement Area (BIA) spokesperson Janis Fread said that the government now intends to amend the legislation so that landlords will be able to pass on a portion of the BIA levy to their tenants.

"That will ensure that the tenants the right to have a say in the management of the Board of the BIA," Fread explained in an interview on Friday, adding that it's the tenants who have a direct impact on what happens in the downtown core and therefore they deserve a say.

"Previously the way it was set up, tenants with gross leases really had no right to have any say on the management of the BIA, so this is good news," Fread said.

Interim tax bills coming Halton Hills taxpayers have until March 4, not February 25, to pay the first installment on their first interim tax bill.

The short reprieve, which will cost the Town a "relatively small loss of investment income"

was necessary because the Town's new billing software was not fully in place in time to give people enough time between when the interim tax bill arrives in their mail box and when the first installment was due.

By now some residents

will have received their interim tax bill - the initial two installments of their 1998 taxes - and a brochure from the Town outlining some major changes in this year's property taxes.

Treasurer Koopmans said they expect some questions about the bills from some

residents who may receive both an interim tax bill and an assessment notice this week.

"We're expecting some confusion when people try to compare the two documents and look at the new assessment and wondering what it means because the tax bill

may say something different," Koopmans explained in a recent interview.

Koopmans said that the new brochure sent out with the interim bills explains some of the changes that have occurred that will affect their taxes including the potential impacts of Provincial

downloading and a Provincial change to Current Value Assessment. As it now stands the impact of Provincial downloading could add an additional \$125 to the property tax bill of a home with an average assessment of \$6,800 but the final figures won't be known until May.

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