

# Rural development debated at council

By FRANCES NIBLOCK  
The New Tanner

The future of an "orphaned" piece of property abutting the Worden View subdivision east of Acton is in the hands of the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).

The landowner, Canadian Tire Limited, had already referred its proposal for six rural estate lots to the OMB when general committee members endorsed staff's opposition to the rural development south of Highway 7, east of the Fifth Line, last Monday night.

A decade ago, the OMB scaled back Worden View to the 16 existing lots, excluding the lots now proposed by Canadian Tire, based in part on opposition from Halton Region and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) which said the development would have a significant impact on agricultural lands.

At the general committee meeting Paul Lowes, a planning consultant for Canadian Tire, argued the proposed six lots are an extension to the existing Worden View subdivision, not a new rural estate development. He read from a February 3, 1995, OMFRA letter, in response to a rezoning on a property immediately south of Canadian Tire's lands, in which OMFRA indicated it no longer considers these lands to be within an area of high priority for agricultural purposes.

"This is a significant shift from ten years ago. There's no rationale for the OMB decision. The rationale for it no longer exists," Lowes said, adding that Town created the "orphaned" piece of property when its planners said Worden View should be a through road from Highway 7 to the Fifth Line, and not a cul-de-sac as proposed by the developer.

"Whether it's called a rural cluster or called a rural estate - it's the same thing - six lots - an extension to an existing plan of subdivision," Lowes said, adding none of the neighbours opposed the plan.

"The only issue is that it doesn't meet the Regional Official Plan which says no more estate lot subdivisions," Lowes argued, asking councillors to not take any position on the proposal, but let the Region "fight its own fight."

Town Planner Bruce MacLean noted the applicant was attempting to join with an application for five lots south of Canadian Tire's property and that move "goes back to our primary concern

- where does it (rural development) end?" MacLean said the issue of where development ends, coupled with Council's intent to direct development to rural clusters and hamlets, is why the Town opposes the development and had suggested the developer look at establishing a new rural cluster.

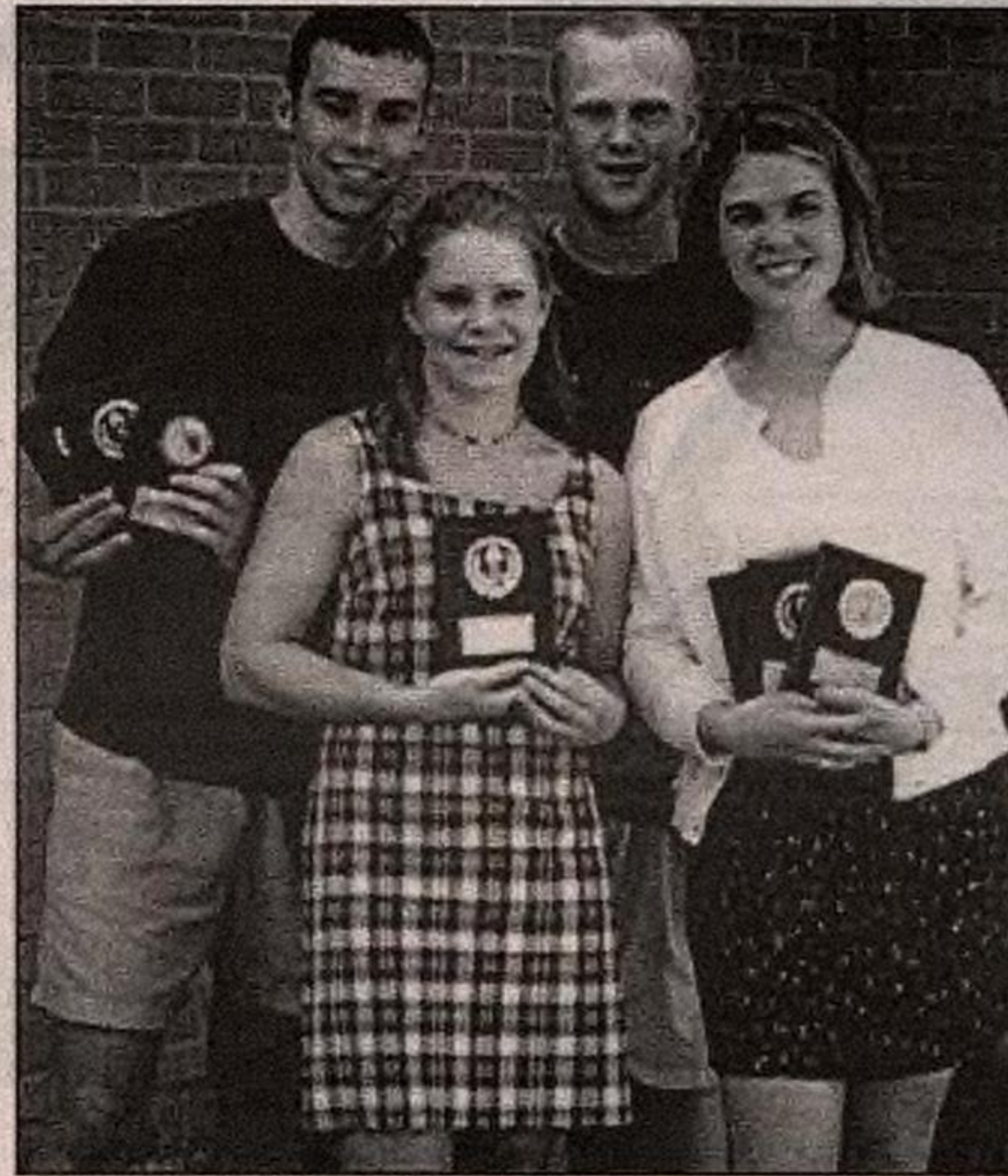
When several councillors suggested the proposed development was a logical extension of the Worden View area and urged their colleagues to support the proposal, CEO Steve Andrews warned that it could be a costly fight.

"If it's the wish of Council to support this application, it would pit us against the Region at the Ontario Municipal Board and would result in the fairly lengthy Board hearing, a very costly one," Andrews said, adding it would be a major battle over a small number of lots.

Mayor Marilyn Serjeantson, along with Councillors Rick Bonnette, Norm Elliott and Clark Somerville, supported staff's position.

"There's certainly not much rural area left," Serjeantson said, adding the rural areas are part of Halton Hills' charm.

By a narrow margin, general committee members supported staff's recommendation to oppose the Canadian Tire Limited development at the OMB.



**ACE ATHLETES:** Outstanding Acton High school athletes were honoured with plaques at the athletic award ceremony and picnic in Prospect Park on Monday. The outstanding male athlete award went to Fraser Hewitt (back left) and Jeff Payne received the award for the most improved male athlete. Katie Locke (left) received the most improved female athlete award and Kelly Holmes the outstanding female athlete award. - Frances Niblock photo

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