



POLITICIANS GATHER: Provincial Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty, left, exchanged greetings with Halton MP Julian Reed after his breakfast with area residents Friday. - Maggie Petrushevsky photo

OFA opposes rural landfill

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) has reaffirmed its position against the development of landfill sites on agricultural land and in rural communities.

The action came at the OFA's monthly meeting of directors from across the province. During discussion of a proposed letter in support of the Temiskaming Federation of Agriculture's opposition to 20 million tonnes of Toronto garbage to be dumped into the former Adams Mine pit, directors from a number of areas of the province asked that the scope of the

letter be expanded.

In an "Open letter to the citizens of Toronto," the OFA states: "Society demands that farmers be responsible stewards of land and should expect no less from our urban neighbours... The OFA objects to the use of agricultural land or landfill that threatens agricultural viability for the disposal of municipal waste. Our long-range goal is to eliminate the need for landfill altogether through effective programs in reuse, reduction and recycling."

"We question Toronto's lost opportunity to reclaim energy

through an energy from waste program which we believe provides a viable and valuable alternative to landfill." OFA's letter states.

The letter points to cities like Guelph where recycling efforts have yielded a 90 per cent reduction in waste going to landfills. "Why can't Toronto focus its considerable energies to reduce its municipal solid waste?"

Earlier this month Toronto City Council voted in favour of the Adams Mine site in Temiskaming, and is due to ratify that decision in October.

Dalton McGuinty in town for some public input

Environmental issues were among the major topics discussed at Friday's breakfast meeting between Dalton McGuinty, leader of the provincial Liberals, and Halton Hills residents.

In a press session after the meeting McGuinty said the Georgetown breakfast was part of his summer tour of the province aimed at hearing public concerns. He decided the way to get that input was to stop listening to the experts and go and listen to the people in their own communities, he said.

Halton Hills residents told him they were concerned about urban sprawl and the pace of development around the town. McGuinty said residents accept that development must happen here, but they want to see all the development space in the suburban core used first.

"They want smarter growth," he said. "They also see a need for a broader planning authority - such as across the whole Greater Toronto Area."

Small communities lack the financial resources to keep taking their planning fights to the Ontario Municipal Board. At the same time developers have very deep pockets. As a result community decisions have been based on the ability to pay and that's wrong, McGuinty said. The Board has favoured the developer because of the way pro-

vincial environmental and planning laws have been loosened.

As well as the was farmland is being devoured by urban sprawl, residents also expressed concern over the increased rates of child cancer and asthma resulting from the pollution of air and water, McGuinty said.

The issue of money for public transit was also raised, as was concern over the government's "disrespect for teachers and how that impacts on education."

McGuinty noted that between 1975 and 1997 only three per cent of teacher contract negotiations resulted in job action of some type. Between 1997 and 1999 that increased to 13 to 15 per cent of negotiations winding up with job actions.

"The change comes from the fact the government is using a

confrontational approach to education at the expense of the kids," he said.

Halton Hills Councillor John Day, who sought the Liberal nomination in the last provincial election, viewed McGuinty's visit to the town as positive.

"I believe in community consultation," Day said. "You can't govern without understanding issues and community events. We need grass roots input about things like urban development and transportation issues. I am concerned about the lack of services in the north (end of Halton Region). We (local councillors) administer what the federal and provincial governments set in place. When the system breaks down you go to the OMB for a third party decision hoping the present will be the building blocks for a better future."

Brochures available

Residents should have received your Town of Halton Hills 2000/01 Fall and Winter Community Activity and Service Guide by now. If anyone did not receive a Guide, you can pick one up at any Town facility such as the Civic Centre, arenas, pools or libraries.

Please submit your Fall registrations to Recreation

and Parks by the lottery deadline of Wednesday, Sept. 6 at noon.

Registrations can also be faxed, with Visa or Mastercard number and expiry date, to (905) 873-1587.

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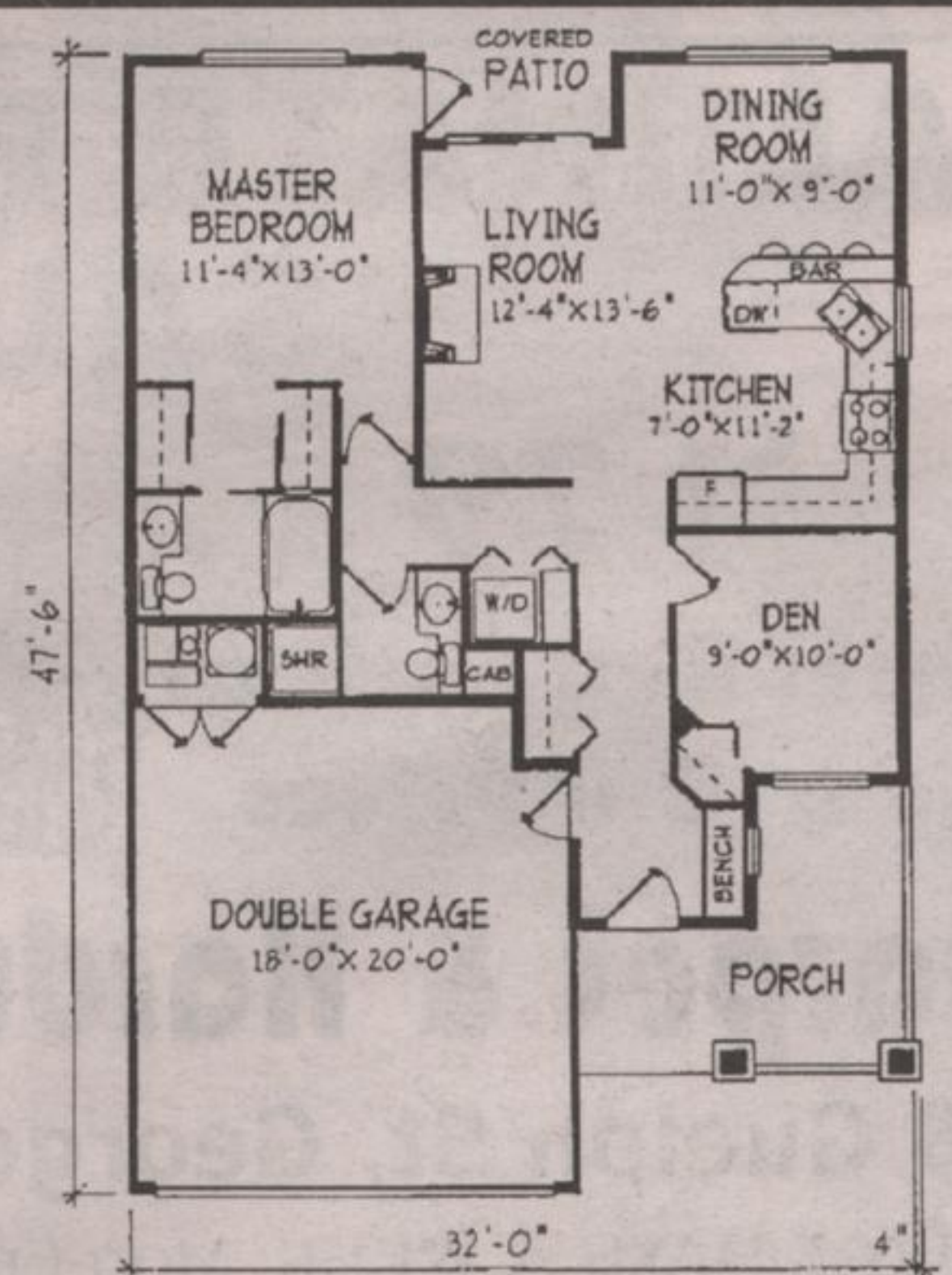
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