

# Town told to keep old Acton street names

BY FRANCES  
NIBLOCK  
The New Tanner

Frustration with Bell Canada and the CRTC, anger over the possible loss of historical identity and suggestions how to eliminate

safety issues surfaced at a lively public meeting on possible street names changes at the Acton Legion on Monday night.

A Town subcommittee recommended changing the names of George Street, Park Avenue and Main

## Discussion lively at public meeting

Streets North and South in Acton after Bell 911 Emergency Response Service said emergency calls could be delayed by confusion because those streets have duplicate municipal addresses in Georgetown.

None of the approximately 60 people at the meeting spoke in favour of changing the names – although several names were suggested if it happens – and the comments from the two dozen people who came to the microphone to put their comments on the record ranged from passionate historical arguments and bottom line dollars and cents.

The crowd clapped loudest for George Street resident Peter O'Meara, who said the Town should not change for the sake of Ma Bell.

"I think Ma Bell should change for the sake of the corporation of the Town of Halton Hills, and for the citizens who live in Acton and in Georgetown," O'Meara said, arguing that if Bell can't provide the service the Town wants, the Town

should look for another service provider.

Main Street South lawyer Margaret Chapman, describing herself as the most moderate person at the meeting because although she doesn't want any change, she is prepared to "play" with her address by changing the number or adding "Acton" to the name.

"I think that you should be trying to deal with the safety issue – if that's your concern – in a way that causes the least disruption to residents and business, Chapman said.

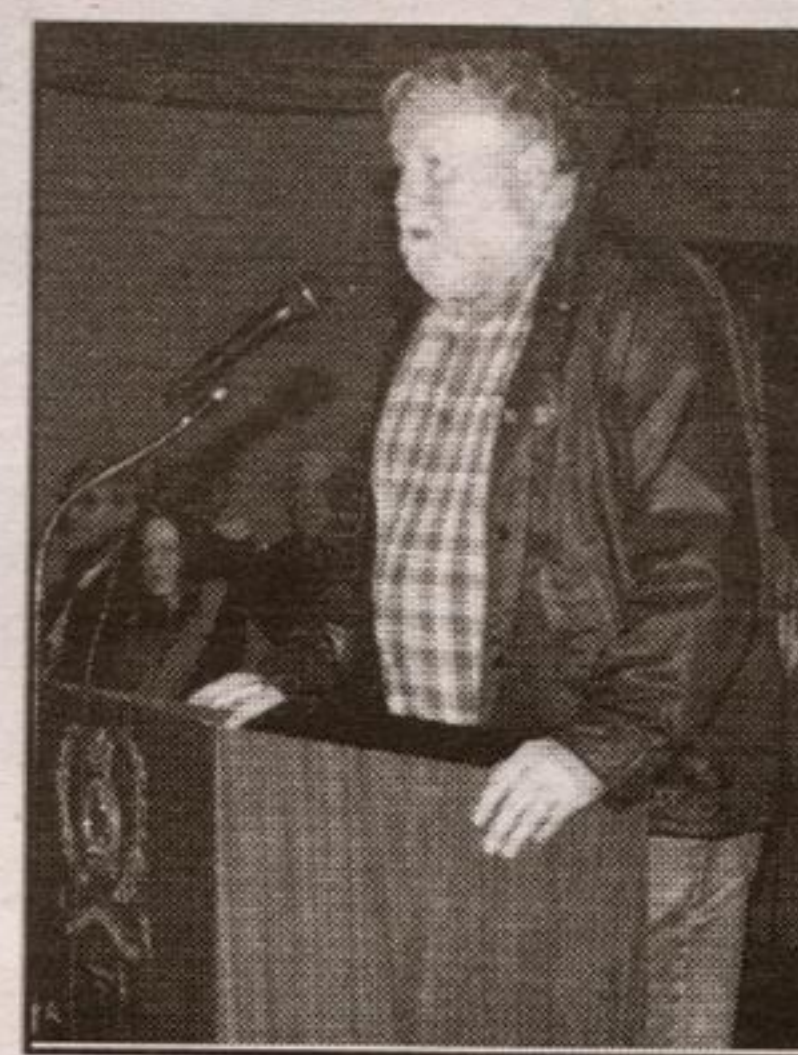
Several people, including Yourway Auto Repair owner Jason Ash, who told the meeting his recent move to Main Street North cost approximately \$4,000, questioned the cost that the name change would create.

Several speakers, including Acton High School student Synnoeve Stockinger, a Berry Street resident, raised the historical importance of not changing the street names in Acton.

"Over the past few years, Acton has lost quite a few of its historical landmarks – we have lost the old school, we have lost our arena and we just barely managed to hang on to our town hall and I just figured it would be a very, very sorry state of affairs if we can't hang on to our street names," Stockinger said.

Birchway Place resident Fred Dunn, noting that his dad had been born on Main Street in 1883, and his grandfather before him, asked that if the name Main Street was changed, it be changed to Dunn Boulevard to honour his family's heritage.

Elizabeth Drive resident Hartley Coles questioned if the database used to route emergency calls was carved in stone, or it could be



PETER O'MEARA

changed.

Fire Chief Bob Meads said hypothetically, anything could be changed, but he doubted if the CRTC – the Canada Radio Television and Telecommunications Commission – would have made Ottawa, Toronto and Halifax change its duplicate street names if it was easy to change the database.

"I don't think we have to bow before the CRTC and Bell," Coles said, adding the system should be changed to identify the town where an emergency call was generated.

Park Avenue resident Gord Furzer said it would be a hard fight to convince Bell Canada and the CRTC to change its database so the street names did not have to be changed, and had a suggestion.

"If we do change the names of the streets, everyone has to change, including the database. So, why don't we just tell them we've changed the names of the streets to Park Avenue "A" and just don't bother changing it," Furzer said.



JASON ASH

Regional Wards 3/4 Councillor Jane Fogal, one of two politicians on the street naming committee, said she wanted to clarify that Bell Canada doesn't care what happens, that it is only a service provider and the problem with duplicate addresses is a decision the Town must make, and that could include doing nothing.

Fogal's comments brought O'Meara back to the microphone to loudly assert that Bell does care and wants to do things as cheaply as possible to generate the greatest return for their shareholders.

"That means this corporation is paying Bell to provide a service, so if we're the piper let's call the tune and tell Bell how we want to be serviced, and if it means we have to go before the CRTC and say to them 'this makes sense,' then that's what we should do," O'Meara said, repeating his request for another meeting with Bell 911 emergency Response Service officials.

Twenty-four citizens spoke at the public meeting, including:

Jay Raats, Main Street South, Acton

"I hope that the cost of having to change our street names, that the cost of bearing that for businesses and individuals will be spread across the whole community and not just on the people that it is going to affect."

Dr. Murray Smith, Cobblehill Road, Acton

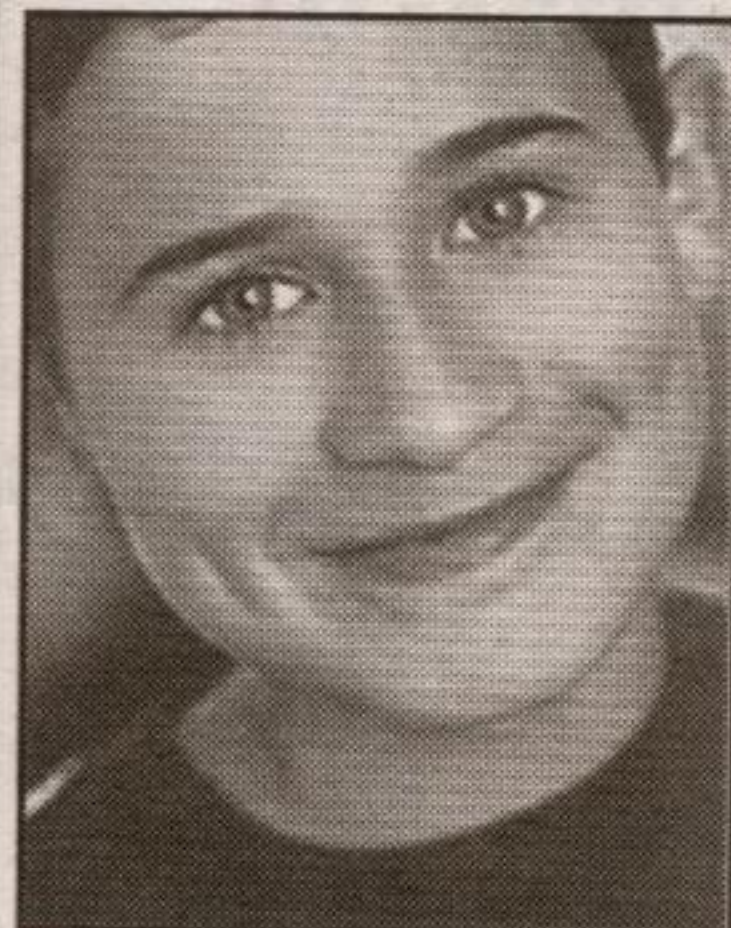
"I would like to think that there was still a chance of stopping this, but I think this is a kangaroo meeting and just here for window dressing."

Henry Logan, Main Street North, Acton

"I had the unfortunate situation of having to call 911 in an emergency for my wife. The question that was asked by the operator was it Acton or Georgetown? No problem, not Halton Hills."

The Town will accept comments on the issue until April 16, when staff will prepare a report for Council debate.

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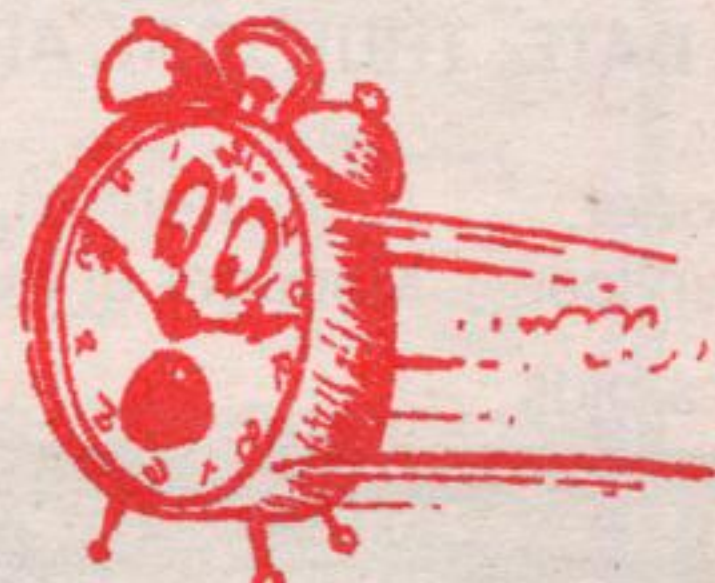
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