

Council back pedals on disputed greenbelt land

Admitting they made a mistake by not consulting affected landowners, Town Council held a special meeting on Friday and reversed an earlier decision to recommend that Queen's Park add an additional 4,000 acres of land at the south end of Halton Hills to a protected greenbelt area.

In November, Council voted to ask the province to include the 4,000 acres in the greenbelt protected area to prevent urban sprawl, but in December, after more than

100 people – most of them affected farmers – jammed the Council Chambers, councillors "softened" their position and asked Queens Park to consult affected landowners before considering the request. Council was working with a tight timeline for response to the province.

At Friday's standing room only meeting, seven delegates appealed to the politicians to reconsider their earlier decision.

Bill Allison, a member of the Town's Of-

ficial Plan steering committee who farms land on both the 15th and 17th Side Roads between the Fourth and Fifth Lines, said he understands the need for a greenbelt area, but is concerned Council's decision making process did not include public consultation.

"If municipalities like yourself are not going to stand up for your own Official Plan, you are going to lose control of your own destiny," Allison said.

Local farmer Harry Brander, an executive

member of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and a member of the Halton Agriculture Advisory Committee, raised the issue of farm viability.

"You cannot preserve farmland without protecting the farmer and the farm business," Brander said, adding the farmers need help with issues like trespassing, biodiversity and changing the taxation rules for transferring farms to future generations.

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What's Inside



Police are looking for two suspects who took DVDs from Shoppers Drug. See Page 2.



Residents of Devon Park met with Acton members of Halton Hills Council about a park on Rennie St. See Page 9.

Letters

We got letters on a variety of subjects. See Page 8.



Looking for organic food? Check the story on Page 11.

Schools fund raising for South Asia

Cold weather alert issued

An Extreme Cold Weather Alert has been issued by the Halton Region Health Department starting Wednesday January 19, 2005.

The Alert is issued when temperatures are expected to fall below -15 degrees Celsius (without wind-chill), or when weather conditions are severe enough to warrant alerting the community to the risks involved with prolonged exposure.

This alert is in effect until temperatures rise above -15 degrees Celsius (without wind-chill) or weather conditions improve and the risks involved with prolonged exposure are reduced.

See Page 9 for more



TSUNAMI RELIEF: Students at McKenzie-Smith Bennett School raised \$545.40 for Southeast Asia relief efforts last week with the help of student council president Hayley Halls (left) and treasurer Renee Martineau. – Frances Niblock photo

Raising thousands of dollars

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
 The New Tanner

Bake sales, dance-a-thons and requests for donations have helped Acton students raise thousands of dollars for Southeast Asia relief, and the students' fundraising efforts continue at several schools.

At Robert Little School the goal was to raise \$2,000, and in four days last week, students and staff donated \$1080, \$500 of it to qualify for a matching grant from Ottawa.

"They did it out of the goodness of their hearts," said special education teacher Dinah Clarkson, adding most of the money was in coins, although several larger donations, including one for \$100, were made.

"We needed to do something to help and the students were so excited to be on board," Clarkson said, adding one class that had been collecting pennies since the beginning of the school year, donated their 6,400 pennies to the fundraising efforts.

Robert Little School will continue its tsunami fundraising efforts until tomorrow (January 21) with all money going to the Salvation Army.

Students at McKenzie-Smith Bennett School donated \$545.40 to relief ef-

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Hundreds pray for church unity

The voices of approximately 520 Acton citizens joined in song and prayer on Sunday at the annual Acton Ecumenical Unity Service at the Acton Legion to celebrate the week of prayer for Christian Unity.

The theme of the service, sponsored by the Acton Ministerial Association, was Our Foundation is Jesus Christ, and in welcoming the congregates, the Reverend Emrys Jenkins of Churchill Community Church, noted their prayers are with those affected by the great tragedy in Southeast Asia.

"God has challenged us to care for others who are a world away, but close to us in our caring and outreach," Rev. Jenkins said, adding that at times like this,

all differences disappear and they reflect on the foundation of their common faith – Jesus Christ and the foundation built on the wood of the cross.

The guest speaker, Pastor Ray Vander Kooij of Bethel Christian Reformed Church, drew on his experiences building homes while attending university in support of the message that Our Foundation is Jesus Christ.

The pastor recounted how he'd been shown a photo of a small crack in the foundation in a new house and how the homeowners couldn't get an occupancy permit until a structural engineer determined the foundation was sound and suitable to support the house built on it.

"Jesus Christ is the only perfect, sinless, absolutely flawless foundation for the church, for our beliefs, for our ministries, for our Christian living," Pastor Vander Kooij said.

He said none of the greatest theologians, preachers or teachers are flawless or sinless, and so any ministry, church, or beliefs built directly on them would be considered unsound and unsuitable for occupancy by the Holy Spirit and by Father God's children.

"Jesus is also the only fitting foundation because of the cross," Pastor Vander Kooij said, comparing the cross to the walls that re-enforce the foundation of a house.

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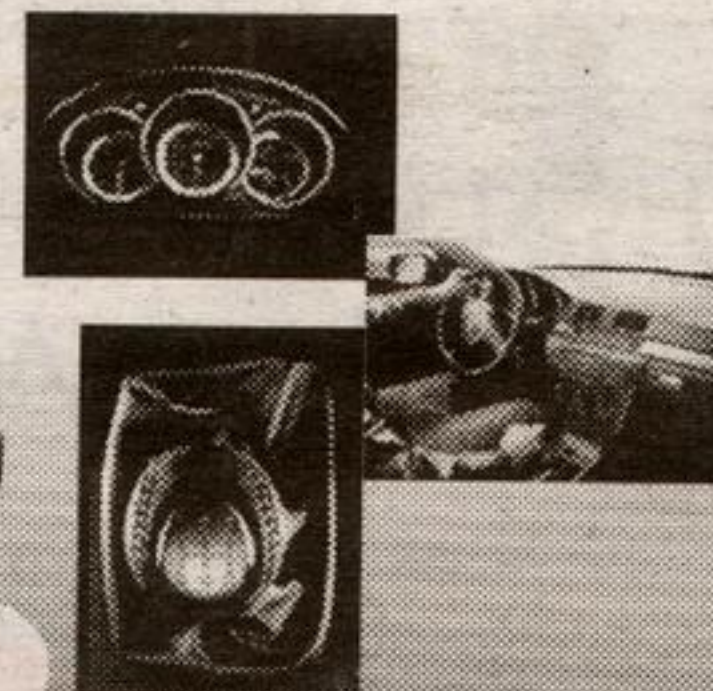
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