# Future of Gardens lands now in hands of OMB

oth the town and Parallax Land Corporation have had their say on the differences they have over development of the Dominion Gardens property and it's now up to an Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) chairman to make his decision on the issues.

On the final day of the five-day OMB hearing dealing with the Dominion Gardens property, OMB chairman James O'Brien said he'd make his decision as soon as

possible but didn't provide a date.

While headway was made on some of the issues before the board, the town and Parallax still have major differences over the number of high density units to be built, the size of the park on the site and the amount of parkland to be dedicated by the developer. There is also a dispute over how much Parallax should pay for improvements at Guelph St. and Mountainview Rd. The chairman will also make a decision on Parallax's desire to sever the commercial and fire hall blocks and on the developer's request to increase the size of the grocery store in the commercial block by 10,000 sq. ft, which was already approved by the committee of adjustment, but is being appealed by the town.

Issues that were resolved were the size and type of stormwater pond to be constructed, and the developer and Halton District Catholic School Board reached a tentative deal for the purchase and sale of the school board site on the property. Joe Birett, superintendent of business for the board, said Friday the agreement has been ratified by the board but it has not yet been signed by Parallax so there could be further negotiating required.

On the final day of the hearing lawyers for the town and Parallax made their closing arguments.

Parallax's lawyer Stan Makuch said Parallax will provide six acres for a park, three of those to be dedicated to the town, with the town purchasing the rest of the land at fair market value. He said Parallax would also set aside a two-acre reserve in the park block to be purchased by the town or school board within two years. The town wants Parallax to dedicate five acres of parkland and purchase three acres at a price set in 1996.

Makuch said the amount of land dedicated is what is required for a density of 120 housing units on the high density block of the property, which is the number of units Parallax wants to build. That number is a reduction from the 360 approved in the master plan.

"The official plan, zoning bylaw and master plan do not require 360 units," said Makuch. "You don't force people to build in order to get more parkland."

Town lawyer Roger Beaman called the property a "hallmark location." He said there was a comprehensive public process involving the town, developer and other stakeholders.

Beaman said there was a social contract between the town and the developer and it's "time for the real contract to follow."

Beaman believes the OMB has authority to impose a minimum requirement for the number of housing units but whether it should is "quite a different matter."

—By Lisa Tallyn, staff writer

## Budget leads to tax cut

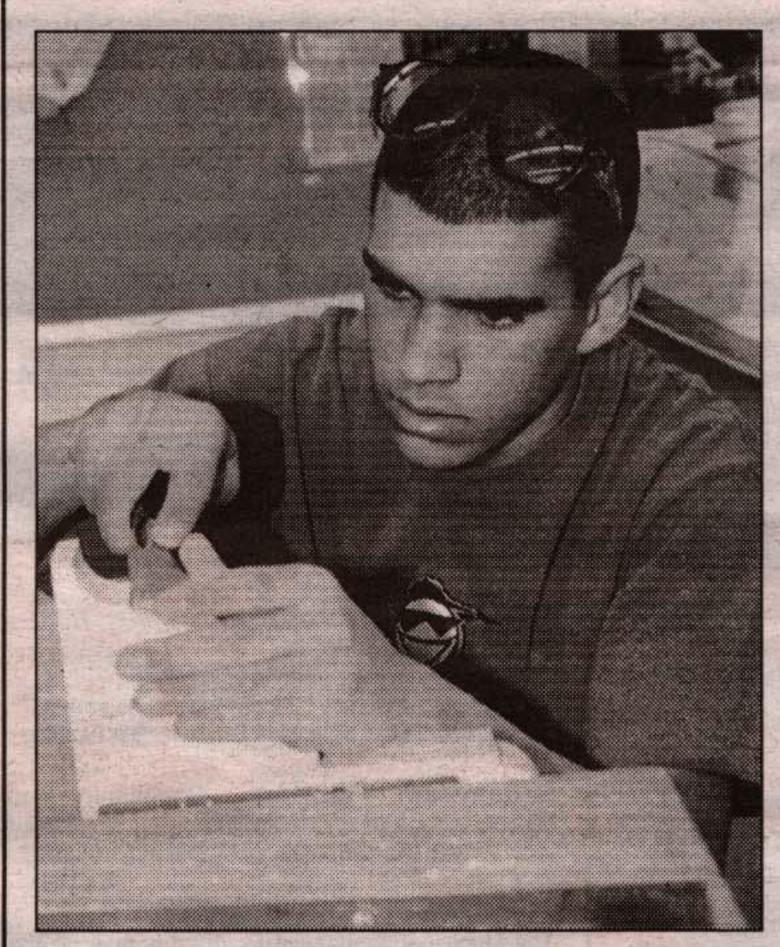
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taxes will be \$766.

Last week, Halton Hills council passed an operating budget of \$12 million and a capital budget of \$7.5 million. The majority of the town increase—\$45— is attributed to a provincial clawback of a Community Reinvestment Fund grant.

In April, Halton Region passed a \$286 million operating budget and a \$24 million capital budget.

School board budgets for the 1999-2000 financial year will not be considered until September.



### Getting technical

Both Georgetown and Acton high schools held technical skills Olympics recently, giving their student an opportunity to showcase their talents. Left, Mark Chumley of Acton High School adds the final touches to his cabinet making work with a chisel, while Georgetown High School student Melanie Frei assembles her mirror frame in the wood shop at GDHS.

Photos by Ted Brown



# Fire guts Dominion Gardens building

Arson is the suspected cause of a fire that gutted a vacant building on the Dominion Gardens property early Tuesday morning.

Halton Hills Fire Department was called to the fire at the Maple Ave. building about 12:45 a.m. When firefighters arrived, the building, which is about 50 feet away from the main building, was fully engulfed in flames. Firefighters fought the blaze for about three hours and the fire didn't spread to any other structures. A fire department spokesperson said the value of the gutted building is unknown.

The stone and wood building that burned was the only structure on the site the Friends of Dominion Seed House Heritage Garden had requested the town retain, but the town hadn't yet decided if it would keep it.

Jane Fogal, vice-chair of the group recommending the building be retained, said the building's foundation was the foundation of the original barn on the property.

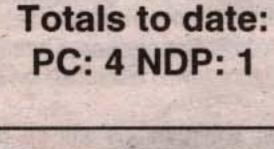
"I feel sick about it," said Fogal. "We had an opportunity to save a piece of the town's heritage and basically it's gone."

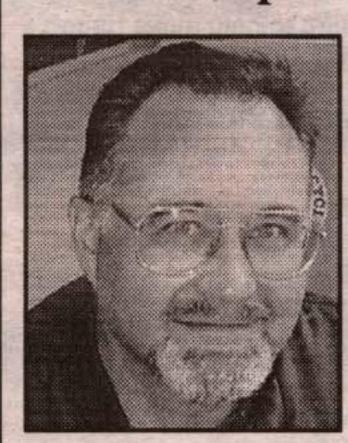
She said plans were to restore and paint the building in mock Tudor style like the original Dominion Seed building. The group wanted to use the first floor for storage and negotiations were ongoing for a day care use on the second

Halton Police are investigating the fire and a spokesperson said youths had been frequenting the vacant buildings on the property.

## What You Said

'Which party to do intend to vote for in the provincial election and why?'





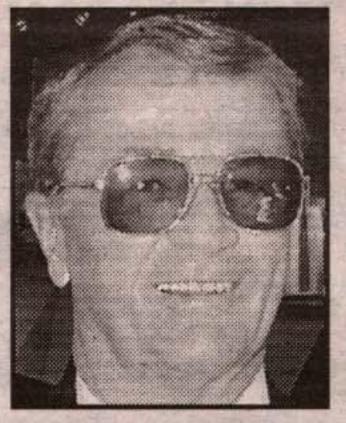
Rick Chambers, retired, Georgetown

"Progressive Conservative, no doubt, because they've demonstrated logical fiscal management for the long term, so I'm hopeful they will contin-



John Valentine, retailer, Georgetown

"I'll be voting Conservative. Although they may have done too much too quickly, they have kept their election promises from the last time, so they have won my trust. The Liberals and NDP are constantly going after personal characters and not concentrating on their own platforms."



Jim Akers, real estate broker, Georgetown

"I'm voting for Harris, because I think he's done a lot of things he said he'd do. He may have gone overboard on a few issues, like healthcare, but it had to be done."



Jeannette Smith, bookkeeper, Ballinafad

"Probably NDP, because of the social issues in this province. The cuts to education and medical care by the present government have been too drastic. I don't have a lot of confidence in the Liberals, I don't like what Mr. Harris has done, and I certainly don't expect him to change."



Betty Carter, housewife, Georgetown

"Harris will get my vote, because I feel he's going in the right direction. It seemed to me, before the Conservatives took power, the inmates were running the asylum, so I'll continue to support the Conservatives."



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