

Fate of arena put on hold

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The November decision is critical as construction must start then so the building can be ready for the 2001 ice season. Any delay would mean the loss of the 2001 season.

Also at the Nov. 9 meeting town treasurer Ed DeSousa will present options on how to pay the additional costs on the arena. For example, if council decides to pay the extra \$2 million, one option could be to put it on the tax bill. DeSousa said a \$2 million debenture, spread over 10 years, translates to a 2 per cent tax increase or roughly \$15 a year for the average homeowner.

"We are paying an extremely high price for hesitation in the past. Past councils chose to keep taxes down to zero per cent and look where it got us," a frustrated Ward 2 Councillor Jane Fogal told her colleagues. "We're in a box. If we had just acted three years ago, and had approved this building program it would have saved millions. Millions!"

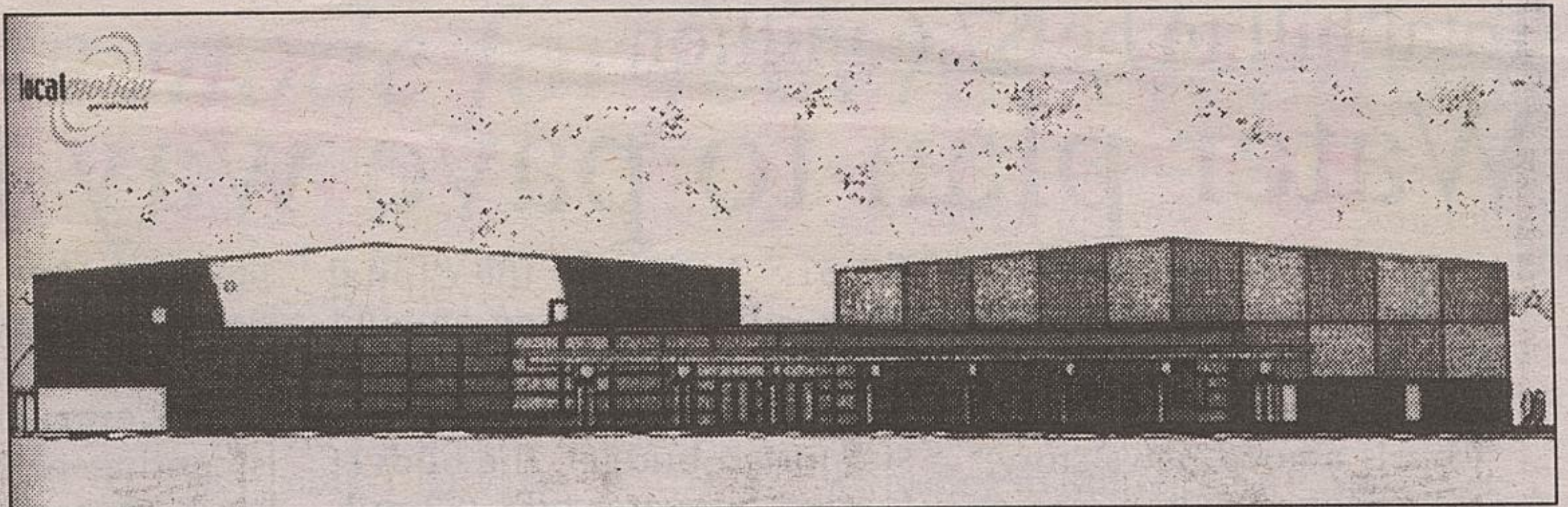
She was strongly in favour of going ahead with the project, saying it's what the community has been demanding for years. Although acknowledging it may mean lost votes in the upcoming election, Fogal suggested the \$15 tax increase to pay for the extra cost.

It's unrealistic, Fogal said, to expect the community, through the local motion campaign, to raise more than its \$2 million goal. The campaign has already reached the \$1.75 million mark.

Fogal worried a lack of commitment by council to go ahead with the arena as currently planned— would not only deter future donors, but could disillusion existing donors who may withdraw their pledges.

The town had prequalified eight contractors, but only four submitted completed tender packages— the rest saying they were too busy on other projects to bid.

Councillors wanted to know if the town waited until next spring to re-tender



der whether bids might come in cheaper.

"I hate to predict in this volatile market," replied Paul Stover, town manager of facilities. "There is a lack of competition out there, and it depends on what contractors are available at the time we go to tender who are interested in this type of work."

Stover said there is a great amount of institutional, school, airport and home building in the GTA right now and it's a matter of supply and demand.

Chatten blasted the architects, Rounthwaite, Dick and Hadley, for not anticipating the increase.

"I don't know how much the cost consultant was paid, but it doesn't take a rocket scientist to know how much development has been going on in the GTA, and the discrepancy (of 20 per cent) just shouldn't be there," he said. "We should be looking into whether we have the right cost consultant, and I'm surprised the architects wouldn't have known."

But architect partner Bob Goyeche said his firm was "as surprised with the numbers as you were, in spite of the fact we have a cost consultant on board." He said a similar aberration (with a different cost consultant) has occurred on a Mississauga project, and suggested perhaps the

GTA is in the midst of a bubble with different pricing.

However, the general consensus by both town staff and the architects is that, in fact, spring bids could end up being more expensive.

Chatten agreed, "the project must go ahead. We have no choice; it's infrastructure we need in town. If we re-tender who's to say it won't come in double if the economy keeps booming."

Tenders for the leisure centre in Georgetown South— currently estimated at \$8 million, will go to tender in late November, with the opening and report to council expected in late January. "It's likely that a similar \$2 million over-run can be expected."

Retiring Councillor Norm Elliott wondered whether the town can afford to proceed with both projects. The decision on the arena should not be made in isolation of the recreation centre, he said.

"This thing is a complete shock to me," said Elliott. He added the (\$6 million) cost of a barebones addition is more than what it cost a few years ago to build the \$5 million Acton Arena (with its two ice surfaces).

—By Cynthia Gamble, staff writer

Fund-raising target won't be raised

It's full steam ahead on the town's local motion fund-raising campaign, despite news the project is already \$2 million over-budget.

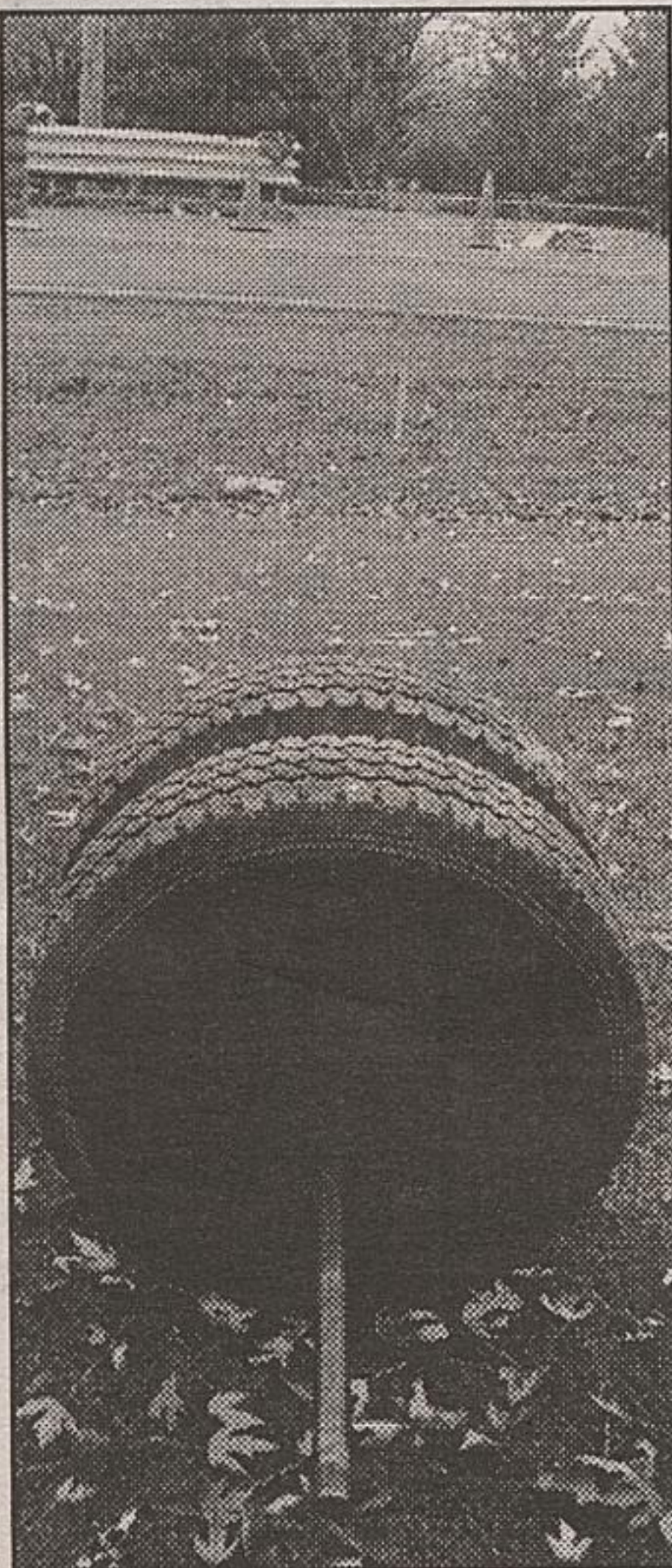
Campaign co-ordinator Marg Fraser said Tuesday the funding constraints will not affect the campaign which is nearing its \$2 million goal. Already \$1.75 million, primarily through corporate donations, has been raised.

The target amount will not be raised,

she added. To do so, she said, will be unfair to the volunteers who committed to the current amount, to donors, and to other groups who are attempting to fund-raise.

It's unrealistic to expect more than \$2 million from local donations, she said.

With the campaign in its final stages Fraser said organizers are "looking for the \$10, \$25 and \$50 donations—they're what count now."



Photos by Ted Brown

Tire hits man

A 49-year-old Keswick man was injured when the rear axle of a truck (below) struck him while he worked near a barrier (left) on Hwy. 7 near the Watch Tower Tuesday morning.

Halton Police say the dual tire axle came off an east-bound truck several metres west of where the victim was operating a drill. The worker suffered a deep cut to his head and was taken to Georgetown Hospital where Tuesday he was reported in stable condition. The truck was driven by a 60-year-old Kettleby man.

Police and the Ministry of Transportation are investigating.



What You Said

'Would you support a tax increase to pay for twinning Alcott Arena?'



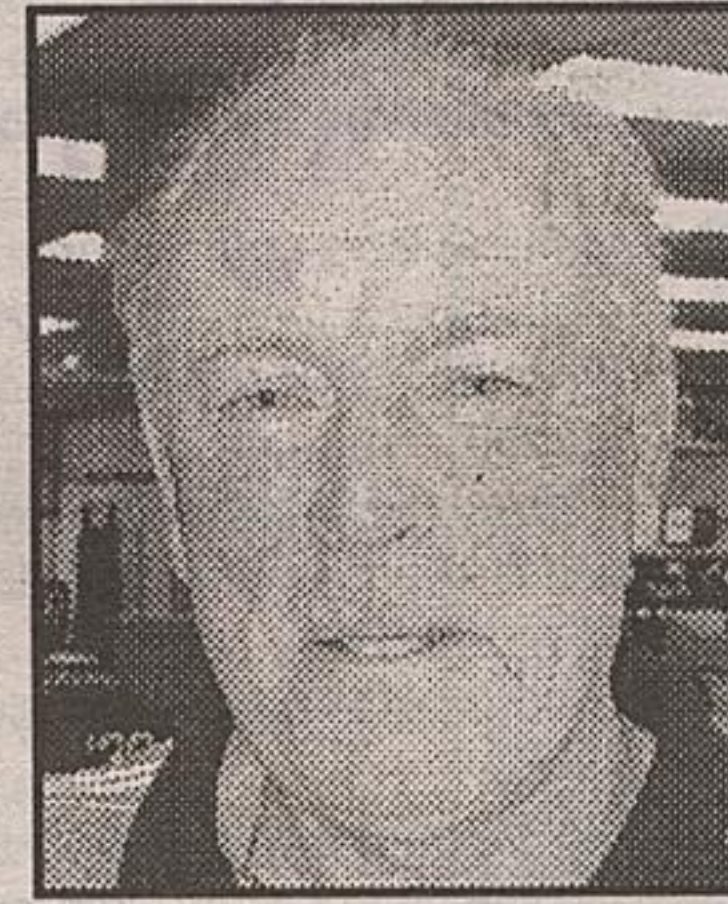
Dale Brumwell, Acton, supervisor

"No, because I live in Acton. Before they spend \$2 million on that I'd like to get some barrier arms for the railway crossing."



Alison Williams, Georgetown, homemaker

"I guess so. You never want your taxes to go up but there has to be a solution. It has to come from somewhere."



Chris Penny, Georgetown, retired

"No, because it's something used for a specific purpose and the people who use it for that specific reason should pay for it. I like golf, so should people pay for a golf course for me?"



Kerry Wright, Georgetown, employment counsellor

"Yes, I would support it. As long as the tax increase is both justified and practical. I think the fund-raising thus far shows commitment to the community."



Dave Lunn, Georgetown, caterer

"I think so. I think minor hockey is very important to kids and it gets them off the streets."

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