

Council says, 'Off with their heads' as parking meters to be removed

Parking meters will be removed from downtown Georgetown, but their parts will be kept in storage if the town decides to re-install them.

Council made the decision at a recent meeting to remove the parking meter heads, and place them into storage for a year. If enforcement of parking areas becomes an issue council may re-install them.

The metre posts will be used for bicycle racks and for parking signage advising that a three-hour parking limit will be enforced.

Members of the BIA urged the removal of the meters saying they are a deterrent to shoppers.

"The very existence of parking meters in a retail area such as downtown Georgetown is similar to putting up a sign that says, 'customers not welcome'," reported the town's new economic development officer Allan O'Neill. "With competition from strip plazas and malls, attracting customers to the downtown area is a difficult task, under the best of circumstances. Having parking meters is simply

bad public relations."

The meters add about \$23,000 a year to the town's coffers, but maintenance for the parking lots costs about \$27,000.

To help replace the revenue, the BIA will pay up to \$5,500 in the 2000-2001 year for parking lot maintenance. The Acton BIA pays up to \$4,000 to support its parking lots. There are no meters in Acton.

O'Neill pointed out in his report that the Georgetown parking lots were in poor condition and a plan for their upgrade should be developed. When the town prepares a plan, with a timetable on the improvements, the BIA will consider increasing its contributions.

Councillor Jane Fogal, the town's rep on the BIA, pointed out the downtown area is on the upswing with all the stores occupied. Without the meters, people are staying downtown longer, are shopping longer; it's more congenial, she said. Keeping the meter heads is a compromise solution to keep town staff happy, she said, but it's highly unlikely that they will ever be re-installed.

—By Cynthia Gamble, staff writer

Blessing ceremony for new school set for Monday

The Halton Catholic District School Board will hold a blessing and ground breaking for St. Catherine of Alexandria Catholic Elementary School in Georgetown South on Monday.

The new school, scheduled to open in September 2001, is named after the patron saint of young girls, students, clergy, philosophers and craftspeople. It is located

on Barber Drive, east of Mountainview Road and south of Argyll Road.

The school is designed to accommodate students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8. It will be the board's fourth elementary school in Georgetown.

Bishop Anthony F. Tonnos, Bishop of Hamilton, will officiate the ceremony, which will begin at 1:30 p.m.



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