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Increase in user fees gets council's approval

Halton Hills council has approved an increase in town user fees on everything from business licences to recreation user fees that will generate $164,000 in additional revenues next year.

Increases in the clerk's department range from 5 per cent to 1,500 (permits for special sales go from $3 to $50) while hikes to recreation department facilities and programs range from 5 per cent across the board to 50 per cent more for use of fields.

Staff warned that without the increased revenues, higher tax bills (a 10 per cent increase is already projected) or service cuts will likely result in 2004.

Council deferred the report one month to allow businesses to comment at a recent public meeting — yet only one did. Carlos Lopes of Dixie Truck Centre, opposed an increase in salvage yard licence and the repair garage licence fees.

Georgetown Cricket Club president Solomon Tancoo cried racism when fees for cricket play were changed from a flat rate to an hourly rate — translating into a $1,400 increase for his club **(see story page 3).** He said the Cricket Club would not be able to absorb this increase and will have to look elsewhere to play.

Janet Allison, representing the Halton Hills Hawks Girls Softball Association, feared the new increases for tournaments would cause a hardship for her group. While the town is moving towards market value of neighbouring municipalities, those facilities are state of the art, whereas the town's are not consistent with today's standards, she said.

Director of Recreation and Parks Terry Alyman said tournaments are considered differently and there is a maximum rate per day for tournaments.

Peter Lamb of the Inter County Recreational Senior Soccer League said his organization doesn't object to a small increase but believes that a 50 per cent increase in one year is unreasonable. He agreed with Allison that the town's sports fields were sub-standard and dangerous, and was "afraid" the extra fees generated would not translate into better field conditions.

"The proposed fee increases will contribute towards the revenue targets established by the 2004 budget process," said Alyman, "So

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Mayoral debate slated for Oct. 28

Halton Hills residents are invited to attend the John Elliott Theatre Tuesday (October 28) for a mayoralty all-candidates meeting.

The meeting, hosted by Georgetown University Women's Club (CFUW), will be held at 7:30 p.m. and feature speeches from all four candidates, followed by questions from the audience.

The four candidates are incumbent mayor Kathy Gastle and challengers Rick Bonnette, John Day and Marilyn Serjeantson.

Fruits of their labour

More than 100 Scouts, Cubs and Beavers were out Saturday selling apples. Getting them polished and ready to go at Georgetown Terminal Warehouse were Craig Quirk, left, of the 4th Georgetown Scouts and Jordan Hoyle of the 3rd Georgetown Scouts. The groups were raising money to help offset the costs of badges, equipment, trips and meeting expenses. Pinehaven Farms' Peter McCarthy supplied and delivered the apples.

Photo by Herb Garbutt

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