

Pesticide use issue won't disappear

Pesticide spraying on town-owned properties will continue to be debated by Halton Hills council in the coming year.

At a recent council meeting, Ward 3 Councillor Moya Johnson requested staff present a report during 2004 budget discussions "outlining the full cost and budget implications to implement a pesticide ban on town property."

"It needs a full debate at budget time now after going through one season," said Johnson. "We realized the issues that have come forward because we didn't commit fully to the (no-spray policy) budget."

The town had approved a policy in January 2002 banning the use of pesticides on town-owned and leased properties. However, council failed to put money in subsequent budgets to fully fund the more expensive and labour-intensive pest management program.

Since then, as town parks, sports fields and boulevards deteriorated with the increased proliferation of weeds and bugs, debate has intensified among residents on the use of pes-

ticides.

In September of this year, council reversed its pesticide ban policy and implemented a spray-when-needed policy. That resulted in many parks and sports fields and both cemeteries being sprayed this fall.

Johnson's motion, carried by council, was precipitated by a presentation by resident Julie Pomeroy.

As the owner of the outdoor enthusiast store, Canoe Country, a member of a condo corporation which doesn't spray its property, and a member of HOPE (Healthy Options for People and the Environment), Pomeroy said council has been "stumbling" on the pesticide issue. She asked council to return to its no-spray policy, saying that a university research paper stated the majority of Halton Hills residents want the no-spray policy.

"I think the municipality is moving in the direction you want, but just not as fast as you want," Councillor Jane Fogal told Pomeroy.

Discussions on the 2004 budget begin in early January.

—Cynthia Gamble, staff writer

Town finally okays new sign bylaw

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process permits and businesses the opportunity to advertise during the Christmas season, unimpeded by new bylaw restrictions.

An attempt by town staff to get building management or ownership to countersign each and every portable sign application failed.

Mark Poullos, representing the ad hoc sign bylaw study committee, which represents the business viewpoint, said this was not feasible since many property owners do not live in this town. He said it would be

more logical if a one-time permission signature simply be kept on file.

The staff's point of view was that it would be more fair if the town staff knew each and every time if the owner approved of the permit as it takes the onus from the town in managing the number of signs per plaza.

The majority of council's point of view was that it was yet another obstacle for businesses to hurdle, and removed this latest proposal from the staff recommendation.

—By Cynthia Gamble, staff writer

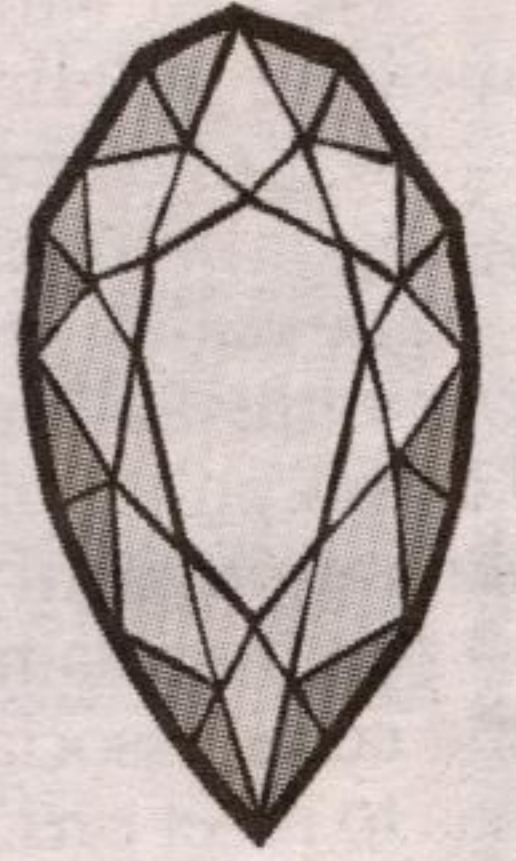
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