

Editorial

Oh no, a tax hike!

A collective groan can be heard throughout Halton Hills as readers read about the \$51 increase on their tax bills this week. Added to the Region and school board tax bills, the average homeowner, with a house assessed at \$300,000, will be paying \$101 more in taxes compared to last year.

Town treasurer Ed DeSousa attributes this increase to playing catchup for all the years of zero per cent tax increases in the 1990s. Neglected infrastructure like roads and buildings (fire station and libraries) are crumbling and services such as in the planning, building and recreation departments are overburdened.

Priorities had to be set. This year it was fire services, including a fire station for Georgetown South and services for the disabled such as an improved transit system and closed captioning of council meetings. In future years, it could be the Halton Hills Public Library branch's turn or maybe something else. As we learned early in the budget debates there are \$67 million worth of projects that remain unfunded this year.

Roads will continue to be priority as the two per cent dedicated tax for pavement management remains on tax bills until at least 2008.

But where is the money coming from? To pay for it taxes have to increase or services reduced further and that puts council in a "rock and a hard place" as Councillor Bob Inglis calls it.

For years, Halton Hills council has been touting the winfall that the 401/407 Gateway Business Park could be for future budgets— but that has yet to be realized. Residential taxpayers continue to pay the bulk of the taxes and that is unlikely to change for several years yet to come.

If the Town's budget priorities are not yours, now is the time, particularly in this municipal election year, to say so.



Letters to the editor...

Former Seed House property is a disgrace

Dear editor,

What a beautiful central park the Dominion Seed House property would have been!

But look at it now. A brand new high school three short years ago and already the parking lot is littered with portables.

I understand the final count will be 26. Then the far corner is sold to developers who obviously tried to cram as many houses as possible into as small an area as they could. The streets are very narrow and the houses are right on top of each other.

Then came the pond at the other end of the property adjacent to Maple Ave. In the summer it is a weed-infested swamp, a breeding ground for mosquitoes, and in the winter a danger, especially with the mild winter we are having now, from thin ice. If that pond was on private property I am sure the owners would have been forced to erect a fence around it. It is a disgrace at the best of times. They say that there are signs telling us that it is Town property. The notices are six feet off the ground and someone should tell them small children can't read.

Thank heavens for the volunteers who worked so hard to preserve a small piece of it for a park. Without them all would have been lost.

And then the final blow. That great big ugly warehouse called a Superstore. They put it on the property backwards to start with so that the loading dock faces Guelph St.

So now we have huge transport trucks exiting onto Guelph St. right across the sidewalk where the high school folks walk to McDonald's in their lunch hour and after school.

But they made it all okay by adding another traffic light on Guelph St. Wonderful. Now the kids can hold up traffic at two lights instead of just one, less than 100 yards apart, as they amble across the street. Look at the extra gas we will burn at \$0.95 cents a litre stopping three times in as many blocks.

What a legacy we are leaving for our children. I fear for their safety from trucks at one end and a cesspool at the other. But unfortunately, no one will think of that until there is a serious accident and then there will be a flurry of lame excuses, finger pointing and blaming it on the other guy, as usual.

Just my thoughts.

John Tatham, Georgetown

Independent candidate states appreciation

Dear editor,

I would like to thank yourself, Ted Brown (In the Jan. 11 edition— fantastic photos from the agri-debate in Halton Hills. You know, the ones where we were all talking with our hands!) and Lisa Tallyn (I got those issues you sent me) for your excellent coverage of the election.

Thanks to the University Women's Club and the John Elliott Theatre for hosting an all-candidates meeting. The same goes for the Halton Federation of Agriculture and Hume's Auction Farm. Thanks to the other candidates for trying to make this country a better place. (I wish you all the best Noel Duignan, congratulations on your party's gains.)

Finally, and most importantly, those who did vote deserve the greatest thanks. We increased local turnout from 67 per cent to 71 per cent. If you didn't vote, I don't want to hear a single, solitary word of political opinion from you until next election.

Again, thank you Mr. Editor, for giving me the space to give credit where credit is due.

Mike Wisniewski,
Wellington-Halton Hills
Independent candidate

Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor must include an address and daytime telephone number. Unsigned letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 200 words and may be edited.

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The Independent Weekend Edition & Free Press

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The Independent & Free Press is published every Wednesday and Friday at 280 Guelph St., Unit 29, Georgetown Ont., L7G 4B1. It is one of the newspapers published by Metroland Printing, Publishing & Distributing Ltd., which includes: Ajax/Pickering News Advertiser, Alliston Herald/Courier, Bancroft This Week, Barrie Advance, Bolton Enterprise, Brampton Guardian, Burlington Shopping News, Burlington Post, City Parent, Collingwood/Wasaga Connection, East York Mirror, Erin Advocate/Country Routes,

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