

OPINION

www.independentfreepress.com

Phone: 905-873-0301
Fax: 905-873-0398

Ministry gets a 'D'

Halton parents living in a new neighbourhood aren't likely to get a very satisfying answer to the question, when can we expect a new school to be built?

That's partly because Halton's two publicly-funded school boards say they have been left in the dark by a Ministry of Education that has dragged its feet in developing a funding formula for new-school construction.

Under the Mike Harris—and later Ernie Eves—Tory government, new school funding was triggered when a school board could demonstrate that enough surplus pupil places existed in a designated community.

Under that old system, school boards were forced to close existing, often lower-enrolment schools to trigger enough pupil places to qualify for new school funding. It was an awful system that pitted older, established neighbourhoods against new ones in a sort of turf war over building new schools and preserving old ones.

In Halton, many existing neighbourhoods had their souls ripped out as established school communities were first shortlisted for possible closure and then eliminated altogether.

While Dalton McGuinty's government promised long ago to do away with this antiquated way of funding new schools, Education Minister Gerard Kennedy has yet to reveal a new and improved way of funding new places of learning.

For more than a year Ontario's school boards have waited patiently for some good news—only to be left hanging. It's an exercise in futility for school administrators to plan for new schools when they have no idea if those plans will pass the provincial funding litmus test.

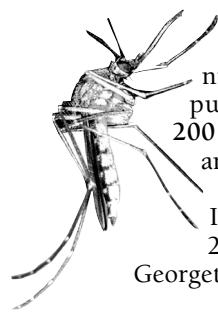
We would submit that this government has procrastinated long enough and that this lengthy delay in unveiling a funding formula for new schools is inexcusable.

The inaction of Kennedy and his ministry has created an unnecessary accommodation crisis within Halton's Catholic and public school boards.

To date this government gets a D in the subject of new school funding and is at serious risk of failing this term if it doesn't seek immediate remedial attention.

Something bugging you?

Send us a letter!



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 Unsigned letters will not be published.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 for content and/or length.

Mail or drop off:
Independent & Free Press,
280 Guelph St., Unit 29,
Georgetown, ON., L7G 4B1
E-mail:
jmcghie@independentfreepress.com

THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS

The Independent & Free Press is published every Wednesday and Friday at 280 Guelph St., Unit 29, Georgetown Ont., L7G 4B1. It is one of several newspapers published by Metroland Printing, Publishing & Distributing Ltd.

Advertising is accepted on the condition that, in the event of a typographical error, that portion of the advertising space occupied by the erroneous item, together with reasonable allowance for signature will not be charged for, but the balance of the advertisement will be paid for at the acceptable rate. In the event of typographical error advertising goods or services at wrong price, goods or services may not be sold. Advertising is merely an offer to sell which may be withdrawn at any time.

Editorial and advertising content of The Independent & Free Press is protected by copyright. Unauthorized use is prohibited.

Price: Store copies 50¢ each; Subscriptions \$26.00 per year by carrier; \$92.50 per year by mail in Canada; \$130.00 per year in all other countries. Plus G.S.T.

Second Class Mail Registration Number 6869. The Independent & Free Press is a member of The Canadian Community Newspaper Association and The Ontario Community Newspaper Association.



Steve Nease



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Taxpayers can't afford a new library

(This letter was sent to Mayor Rick Bonnette. A copy was made available for publication).

Dear editor,

I would like to comment on the new library. It is all well and fine to build this new library, but not at the expense to the taxpayers.

In *The Independent & Free Press* it was implied that yet another raise in taxes is expected for the new library. Also looming for the taxpayers, is the OMERS tax, then there are extra taxes for the municipality, which will no doubt happen next year again. When does it end? When we are all bankrupt?

The town has just increased my taxes by \$20 a month. Isn't that enough for now? It sure is for me.

How do you expect the seniors on fixed incomes to keep paying more, when they can't make ends meet now? Seniors have paid their dues and you should have respect for the financial burdens that keep being put on them due to all these increases. Are you giving them any breaks?

I will be one of those seniors in three years and I am getting very worried. Am I going to have to sell my wonderful house because I can't afford the increasing taxes the city keeps demanding from me? Not to mention all the other increasing prices from hydro, Union Gas, gasoline, cable etc.

I do not like the way Town CAO

Dennis Perlin and treasurer Ed DeSousa think that just because they have devised their neat little financial plan for the library, that the taxpayers will be as pleased as the town councillors are about it.

Build the new library, but do it through fund-raisers, or lotteries (like Toronto is thinking of doing) or by any other means to raise money, but leave the taxpayers alone for a change. If the Town can't afford to build this library without raising taxes then don't build it! If there is something I can't afford, I just don't buy it. Why should the Town be any different?

Councillor rebuts union boss's criticism

Dear editor,

Norman Beattie, president of CEP Local 591G was wrong in his March 3 letter to the editor, with two flawed criticisms of me.

First, instead of "attacking the goodwill" of the mayor, as Mr. Beattie claims, I was defending the interest of the taxpayers when I urged council to define the cost of a job employment adjustment action centre for Curwood employees.

Second, Mr. Beattie suggested I should be "praising the decision of (my) mayor and fellow councillors." In fact, I did exactly this, and the Feb. 24 issue of *The Independent & Free Press* accurately reported

Sorry, if I don't sound too enthusiastic about a new library. I would rather keep warm and eat first and be able to stay in my nice comfortable house than have to sell it and move to a little apartment because I am all taxed out.

Stop thinking of us taxpayers as goldmines because, to be honest, we are more like empty wells. We are sick and tired of all these increases, especially property taxes. The town is turning us all into paupers!

Anita Shelton,
Georgetown

that "Davis complimented the mayor on his initiative too, which he said occurred at break-neck speed when the Ward 3 councillor was on vacation."

My intention in all this was for the Town to be able to be reimbursed for any costs incurred by this employment centre if the opportunity arises. In fact, the staff report to council did suggest cost recovery opportunity.

If we know the hard costs of using a facility from the onset, our cost-recovery claims are much more defensible. And that is looking after our taxpayers.

Councillor Mike Davis
Ward 3, Georgetown

STAFF DIRECTORY

Publisher

Ken Nugent

Advertising director

Steve Foreman

(sforeman@independentfreepress.com)

Retail advertising manager

Cindi Campbell

(ccampbell@independentfreepress.com)

Managing editor

John McGhie

(jmcghie@independentfreepress.com)

Business manager

Carol Young

(cyoung@independentfreepress.com)

Distribution manager

Nancy Geissler

(distribution@independentfreepress.com)

ADVERTISING

Retail Sales:

Jennifer Spencer (jspencer@independentfreepress.com)

Adam Spinney (aspinney@independentfreepress.com)

Brendan Louth (blouth@independentfreepress.com)

Michelle Wan (mwan@independentfreepress.com)

Real estate:

Sue Spizziri (sspizziri@independentfreepress.com)

Classifieds:

Kristie Pells (kpells@independentfreepress.com)

ACCOUNTING:

Rose Marie Gauthier, Jennifer Christie, Michelle Wimmer

EDITORIAL

Cynthia Gamble: News editor

(cgamble@independentfreepress.com)

Ted Brown: Photography

(tbrown@independentfreepress.com)

Lisa Tallyn: Staff writer

(ltallyn@independentfreepress.com)

Eamonn Maher: Staff writer/sports

emaher@independentfreepress.com)

PRODUCTION:

Mary Lou Foreman, Kevin Powell,

Shelli Harrison, Dolores Black, Debbie MacDougall