

Local officials welcome Smoke Free Ontario Act

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Staff Writer

Halton Hills residents won't notice any real change when the Smoke-Free Ontario Act comes into effect today (Wednesday) because the provincial legislation just catches up to the Town's tough anti-smoking bylaw introduced here in 2004.

Like the Halton Hills bylaw, the provincial act prohibits smoking in all enclosed workplaces and public places.

The one change between the provincial act and the Town's existing bylaw pertains to smoking on outdoor patios, said Halton Hills Councillor Moya Johnson.

Johnson said under the Halton Hills bylaw people could still smoke on outdoor patios, but under the new Smoke Free Ontario Act, if there's a roof or any covering over a patio, smoking is now prohibited.

Regardless of the minimal effect in town, the provincial legislation is being welcomed by local and regional government officials.

"The Smoke Free Ontario Act provides some consistency across the province," said Tony Amalfa, manager of Healthy Environments with Halton Region. "Therefore it



Local officials say the new Smoke Free Ontario Act only catches up to local anti-smoking legislation. Photo by Ted Brown

adds protection from second-hand smoke to all residents."

Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette welcomes the legislation.

"It won't mean anything to Halton Hills because we have one of the strictest bylaws in the province," said Bonnette. "We put a level playing field within Halton Hills and now it's province-wide and I think it should be applauded."

Many restaurant and bar owners were not happy when the Town's smoking bylaw came into place, but Bonnette said they should feel better now because the rules are the same right across the province.

"At least this puts everybody in the same boat," said Bonnette.

"We had lobbied for years for the province to come on board

with it," said Johnson, a strong proponent of the Town's anti-smoking bylaw. "I think it's terrific and it does level the playing field."

"We're very happy the Province has come on board," said Johnson.

Smoker Terry Lark said he feels sorry for those in the entertainment industry who invested in designated smoking rooms.

"The amount of money they invested is a waste," said Lark.

Health Promotion Minister Jim Watson said the

smoke-free legislation makes Ontario a leader in North America.

"This legislation is both comprehensive and fair. It gives municipalities and businesses what they were asking for with regard to tougher province-wide standards, and reflects the efforts of those who have worked to create a smoke-free Ontario," said Watson.

The Smoke Free Ontario Act will:

- Ban smoking in enclosed public places and all enclosed work-

places including restaurants, bars, schools, private clubs, sports arenas, work vehicles, offices and entertainment venues, including casinos, bingo halls, bowling and billiard establishments.

- Eliminate designated smoking rooms in restaurants and bars, permit residential care facilities to operate controlled smoking areas which are specially designed to ensure nobody outside the room is exposed to second-hand smoke.
- Prohibit smoking on patios that have food and beverage service if they are either partially or completely covered by a roof.
- Toughen the rules prohibiting tobacco sales to minors.
- Prevent the promotion of tobacco products in entertainment venues and immediately restrict the retail promotion of tobacco products and impose a complete ban on the display of tobacco products by May 31, 2008.

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'I think it's terrific and it does level the playing field.'



—Councillor Moya Johnson

Mom wants to thank teen who 'saved my daughter's life'

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"We want to make a plea to (the driver). We don't want this happening to anyone else. If (the driver) faces up to the consequences maybe he will learn from his actions after that," says Eagleson.

Houle's supervisor at Tim Hortons, Janice Valaphen, was one of the first to arrive at the accident scene and witnessed the pain the young woman was in. She waited with her at the hospital until Eagleson arrived.

"Whoever did this to this young lady, come forth if you have a heart and if you have a conscience, and if you are a father," pleaded Valaphen to the driver.

Eagleson feels "it's completely unfair" this happened to her daughter who was just trying to get home from work.

"And now she's stuck here in the hospital, and there's no insurance coverage and all the medical bills are coming in," says Eagleson, a single mother who works three jobs and was struggling to make ends meet before the accident.

A bill for the ambulance has come in, the physiotherapy tab is already climbing towards \$1,000, and she needs to buy or rent a walker before her daughter can come home.

And then there's the fact that Houle won't be able to work for several months and they both badly need her pay cheque.

Without an identified driver there is no

access to insurance coverage for the medical costs, so Eagleson is applying to a motor accident vehicle claim fund hoping for some financial help.

Houle doesn't remember much about the accident.

She was riding westbound on the sidewalk when she checked to make sure no one was coming, then crossed Normandy Blvd.

"I checked on the right side of me and I saw a flash," says Houle. "That's the last thing I remember.

I just remember waking up at Georgetown Hospital."

But Eagleson says her daughter was lying on the road for some time before anyone noticed her, and cringes at the thought she could have been run over by another vehicle.

She says fortunately a 17-year-old boy heard Houle moaning at the side of the road and ran to tell his mom, who called 911 on her cell phone.

"He saved my daughter's life and I would very much like to speak to him to tell him that," says Eagleson.

After being rushed to Georgetown Hospital Houle was transferred to Sunnybrook Hospital.

She spent a week there, much of the time suffering with a blinding headache from the fractured skull, and pain from her other injuries. She regrets she wasn't wearing a helmet.



NANCY HOULE

'I checked on the right side of me and I saw a flash. That's the last thing I remember. I just remember waking up at Georgetown Hospital.'

The pain in her head has finally subsided somewhat, but Nancy still requires pain medication.

She has been undergoing physiotherapy

sessions since two days after the accident and they will continue when she goes home.

Her mom says it hasn't been determined yet when her daughter will be released from the hospital.

"She can take small steps with the aid of the walker. She can't walk on her own," says her mom.

She says it will take five to six weeks for her daughter's hip to heal, and it's unlikely she will be able to work for at least four months.

Halton Det. Const. Rich Solecki says hit

and run accidents involving injured people are not common in Halton.

"It's really rare for someone to leave a person lying on the road," says Solecki.

He says the last similar hit and run accident he recalls in the past five years was a fatal on Tremaine Rd. in Milton. That driver turned himself in to police a week after the accident.

Police are still investigating the accident that injured Houle and based on witness information are looking for a large burgundy or red pickup truck that was seen driving erratically in the area around the time Houle was hit.

Solecki says the vehicle was possibly a Ford F-150 pickup truck with a two-door extended cab with small rear "wing" style rear doors, silver rocker panels and tinted windows.

The truck could have damage to the front end likely near the lower portion of bumper and on the undercarriage.

"Although we are interested in locating the pickup truck, we still are looking to the public to report any vehicles with fresh damage to the front bumper and/or grill area," says Solecki.

Anyone with information is asked to call Solecki of the Regional Traffic Bureau at 905-878-5511 ext. 5108 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

(Lisa Tallyn can be reached at ltallyn@independentfreepress.com)



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