

# Mayor outlines Town's financial concerns to finance minister's representative

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Staff Writer

Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette took the opportunity recently to highlight some issues of local importance to a representative from Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's office.

Bonnette was impressed that Susan McGovern, director of regional affairs with the federal finance minister's office, visited, and wanted to hear what issues are important to the community. He believes it's the first time anyone from the finance minister's office has made an effort to meet the town's mayor.

"I would like to applaud the finance minister for taking this initiative," said Bonnette.

Flaherty said McGovern's visit with the mayor was on his behalf because of his commitments in Ottawa. He said he's met with

all the regional chairs, Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion and Toronto Mayor David Miller.

"Our intention is to meet with all the mayors in the GTA...making sure what their needs are, what their concerns are, particularly with respect to transit and infrastructure," said Flaherty.

After consulting with other councillors and Town staff, Bonnette highlighted to McGovern several issues the federal government could play a role in including:

- Provide support and bi-lateral funding for the Sport and Recreation Infrastructure program to address the \$31 million infrastructure shortfall the Town is projecting over the next 10 years
- Invest in the existing network of public



**RICK  
BONNETTE**

libraries, which is critical to the creation and maintenance of healthy, high functioning communities

• Provide funding to enable public library staff to be Service Canada representatives

• Provide funding for the Acton Agricultural Society building which will be used by the society and indoor soccer groups

• Additional municipal infrastructure funding (above the gas tax) to deal specifically with rural roads and bridges due to the lack of a good property tax base

• Assurance of the continuation of the federal gas tax program beyond 2009/10

• Concessions and assistance to have major commercial ventures to shop local instead of import products when some are

made locally in Ontario or Canada

• Awareness and assistance to farmers (reduction of taxes/increases in grants) because of their valuable contribution to the economy and improvements to any current policies that may be counter-productive to farmers

• A concerted effort to make farming viable

• Encourage and provide assistance to provinces to give municipalities more powers to raise revenues other than through property taxes/user fees and remove non-property tax-related items (social assistance/housing/education) off the property tax base

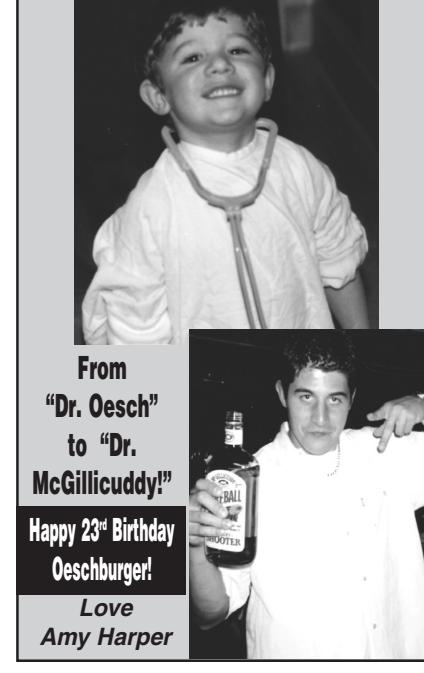
• Tax benefits to seniors in Halton Hills

• Ensure health care funding for hospitals and new Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) to protect local health care services for the growing Halton Hills community.

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### CASH PRICE

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