

THE INDEPENDENT

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Recipe of the week:
Buttermilk scones
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Hairstylist story sparks
flurry of attention
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put on a show
at Alcott

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Health of It
special section

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WEDNESDAY...

A Halton Hills councillor is pushing for a freeze on how much Halton pays to help Toronto cover its social service costs. For details see Wednesday's edition.

For breaking news go to:
www.independentfreepress.com



Having a ball at the pool

Callum Williams, 18 months, enjoyed the water at the Gellert Community Centre pool recently as he and mom Amber took part in last session of the 14 week-long Diaper Fit water fitness class. New classes are now available. For more information contact the Gellert Community Centre at 905-873-4344.

Photo by Ted Brown

Town proposes fat-free budgets for 2007

CYNTHIA GAMBLE
Staff Writer

Town Finance Director Ed DeSousa has told budget committee members that the proposed 2007 budgets contain few "extras".

DeSousa said the 2 per cent base budget increase to the operating budget does not include any additional staffing, except what was approved by council in 2006, any additional equipment purchases or any program expansion.

DeSousa, gave an overview of the proposed 2007 operating, capital and capital forecast budgets Tuesday night to the committee.

He said the proposed increase of 2 per cent

in the Town's 2007 operating budget is relatively low compared to other Greater Toronto Area communities and is less than the Consumer Price Index of 2.3 per cent in October 2006.

Assessment is projected to grow at 3.6 per cent in 2007—the second highest in recent years—generating about \$850,000 in additional tax dollars. Last year it grew 4.4 per cent.

Staff is recommending a \$22.3 million operating budget—a 5.3 per cent increase over last year's budget. That translates to a \$49 increase on property tax bills for the average residential house assessed at \$300,000. Combined with Region and education tax hikes, taxpayers are facing a \$79 increase.

The 5.3 per cent increase includes the 2 per

cent base budget increase, 2 per cent (\$400,000) dedicated to the pavement management program and 1.3 per cent (\$266,700) for the hiring of four full-time firefighters.

The 5.3 per cent increase is only proposed at this time, and during the next four nights of budget deliberations that figure could go up or down. Budget committee meets on the evenings of Jan. 15 (public delegation night), 16, 29 and 30, with council approval of the 2007 budget scheduled for February 5.

In fact, Town staff has proposed 1 per cent (about \$241,000) in extras to be considered by the budget committee.

See FEW, pg. 11

A white squirrel? That's nuts!

Georgetown resident Jenny Blunt had never seen a white squirrel before this one showed up in her yard after Christmas. The rare squirrel, which has been a regular visitor at her bird feeder, is actually a random mutation of the eastern grey squirrel—the type of squirrel commonly seen in this area. See story on page 3.

Photo by John Blunt



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