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Back to class for Acton Trustee

By Frances Niblock

Jerry Ockenden, Acton's new trustee on the Halton District School Board, is eager to learn.

Like the ready and able students that Acton teachers hope fill their classes, Ockenden can't get enough in his new role as trustee for

Wards 1/2 (rural and urban Acton) with the Halton District School Board.

For the first time, Halton Hills has two trustees on the board to cover Halton Hills – the Georgetown, Ward 3/4 seat, was won by Gillian Tuck Kutarna, and Ockenden won the new Acton seat.

Tuck Kutarna also won the election as chair of the board, defeating the former vice-chair, Burlington trustee Peggy Russell.

The municipal election produced seven new faces on the 11-seat school board – the old board was seen by many as dysfunctional – and Ockenden said his initial concerns about political infighting on the board have been allayed.

"I feel a little bit better.... the previous chair is gone, and from the information I've been able to gather,



**Jerry Ockenden,
Acton Trustee**

that's not a bad thing," Ockenden said on Saturday, adding the four returning trustees appear "honest and forthright" and willing to help the new trustees get up

to speed.

Ockenden said there is a lot to learn – from policies and procedures to voting rules – some of which was covered on Monday at a Ministry of Education orientation in Toronto.

"It's an opportunity to people to meet the Minister (of Education) and get some basic information. It's like going to school," he said, adding in February, new trustees are invited to a three-day symposium for new trustees, hosted by the Ontario Public School Board Association.

"I'm finding it really exciting – there are just so many things that I'm looking forward to learning."

The Board meets again on January 17.

Council hires architect

The architects hired by the Town to design three major facilities in Halton Hills, including a new satellite fire station in Georgetown South, a new fire HQ in Georgetown, and the expansion of the Georgetown Library and Cultural Centre, will be encouraged to incorporate design, construction and operational practices that combine healthy, high-quality and high-performance advantages with reduced environmental impacts.

Acton Councillor Jon Hurst questioned if the buildings would use some or all of the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) principles, and was told by staff that full LEED certification is costly and timely, but the Town would abide by all aspects of environmentally friendly and energy conservation measures.

"There are vast opportunities in the planning stages to initiate a lot of LEEDs practices which at may not necessarily cost a lot more money to implement, but that would lead to significant cost savings," Hurst said.

Town Council okayed \$336,000 to hire Thomas Brown Architects to work on both fire department projects, and \$544,000 for Chamberlain Architect Services Limited for the Church Street library expansion.

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