



INITIATED INTO 197: Twenty-one new members were initiated into Branch 197 of the Royal Canadian Legion in Acton on Friday night. They included, front, President Wes Kutasienski, Mia McAllister, Leslie Schipper, John Krapek, Lisa Fuller, Marie Richardson, Tony Marrow, Andrea Gill, George O'Donnell. Second row: Frank McAllister, Robert Hicks, Jim Horne, Anne Horne, Brian Knott, Keri Kuechler, David Gill, Taylor French. Back row: Dermot Richardson, Stephen Richardson, David Richardson, Brian Kuechler, Peter Wilkinson, Eri Pinkerton. – Photo by James Hayes.

Comrades,

The Initiation Ceremony last Friday evening saw 21 new members join the ranks of Branch 197. We welcome their participation in the activities and work of Acton Legion.

Birthday Bash

One hundred plus, family and friends were on hand last Saturday afternoon to share in the celebration of comrade Gord McCutcheon's 85th birthday. We wish him many more.

BRANCH No. 197 **LEGION NEWS**
By James Hayes P.R.O.

Entertainment

Ron and Betty Nielson will be providing our entertainment in the games room on Saturday afternoon March 14. Pencil it in your calendar and come early to ensure a good seat.

British Isles Show Sat. April 4

A bus and admission to

the show is going to be available at a cost of \$25 each. Enquire at the bar for further details. I understand there are very few tickets left!

Sports

Zone Euchre – There will be a playoff at the Branch this Saturday, March 7 for teams wishing to go to Zone Euchre

on March 21. Please note date change for playoff.

Cribbage – There is a team going to Provincial at Branch 85 in Kapuskasing on March 14.

Bowling – Wayne Mason will be going to Provincial Singles in Kitchener.

Our best wishes to all of the above, during their upcoming competitions.

*Yours in comradeship,
Jim Hayes,
Branch PRO.*

Council mulls over going on offensive over MSB land

By Frances Niblock

Town Council could go on the offensive in the battle to stop the Halton District School Board from selling a surplus portion of the McKenzie-Smith Bennett School site.

In a Notice of Motion approved unanimously last Monday, Town staff were asked to prepare a comprehensive study of all Halton Hills school sites to examine their role in terms of planning and zoning in the community. Mayor Rick Bonnette said the Town might freeze all school site lands for two years with an interim control bylaw, making the MSB land much less attractive to a developer.

"This is not a shot over the bow – but this is almost as close as a direct hit as possible and that is the interim control bylaw...that would essentially freeze all lands for about a two year period," Bonnette said, adding they want their lawyer's opinion on the move so it could be used if negotiations don't go well with the school board.

Bonnette noted that the surplus land issue could come to a school ground anywhere in Halton Hills, and they need a comprehensive study to investigate the

issues, including the fact that elementary school sites are zoned low density residential, unlike high school sites that are zoned institutional and would require a public process to be rezoned residential if declared surplus.

The current role of each of the school sites in the community fabric of the town would be investigated to determine whether the land use designations in the Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw for all school sites are adequate, or should be changed to ensure any proposed land use change for a surplus site requires amendments to both the Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw.

The issue of timing and availability of water and wastewater servicing would also be investigated in the study which Council wants to have the highest priority, with a hired consultant paid for from the tax stabilization fund, if necessary.

Staff will report back with the terms of reference for the study and on the proposed interim control bylaw at the April 6 Council meeting.

In a second Notice of Motion, also approved unanimously, Town Council formally went on record asking the school board to rescind its decision on the

MSB school site. School board trustees have said they were directed by the Ministry of Education to divest themselves of any surplus property in order to be eligible for funding for new schools and upgrades.

The school board "miscalculated" the anger and frustration of many people with its decision to list part of the MSB school site as surplus so it can be sold, according to Mayor Bonnette.

"This is our opportunity to vehemently oppose this land being deemed surplus, and again, it was done with no consultation with the town, even at a staff-to-staff level," Bonnette said adding the petition being circulated, the Family Day rally and a press conference – all well attended on short notice – send a clear message that people are upset that part of the fabric that makes up Acton's heritage is threatened.

The depth of anger and the tenacious community fight to try to convince the school board of rescind its decision was evident as three speakers updated Council on their efforts to date.

3,300 on petition

MSB parent Allison Jones said 3,300 names have been gathered on a petition asking

the school board to rescind its "despicable" decision to include the MSB site on the list of eight surplus properties. She said a copy of the petition is available at Acton's Home Hardware if anyone wants to sign it.

Robert Bedard, vice-chair of the MSB school council, said the original 1950s decision by the Town of Acton to buy the school site was an investment by the community for the community.

"This site as a whole is a village green by intent I suspect, but by use as I have seen...this village green is a piece of the fabric of our community," Bedard said.

Ian Watson, president of the Acton Villa Soccer Club, the largest external user of the MSB lands said the board's decision is a "knee jerk reaction" to short-term funding problem where the proposed solution affects the long-term future of the widely used sports field.

"I'm very concerned about the future of public assets, and so as a resident of Acton, as taxpayer and a volunteer, I'm asking Council to support the community in urging the school board to reverse its decision until the proper analysis has been done and presented to the people of Halton Hills," Watson said.

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