

Arena purchase may not materialize

Government re-evaluates post office plans

By Bob Burt
Plans to erect a new post office for Milton on the site of the former Brown St. Arena may never materialize. The Champion learned this week.

Arnie Cobbald, a spokesman from the Post Office Department in Burlington, said problems related to the project centre around the disposal of the existing old post office on Main St.

Mr. Cobbald said the Department of Public Works had asked him to do another assessment of the situation and come up with a financial analysis showing what it would cost to continue on with the old post office and a similar analysis showing the cost of a new post office.

Cobbald said the Department of Public Works doesn't want to be left with the old post office building on its hands and he suggested that because the building was considered to be of historic significance and some prestige in the community, there could be opposition to the building being sold or rented.

He said he had just received a directive to take a second look at the project Monday morning.

Although the new building would be for the use of the post office, the federal department of public works and the federal treasury board become involved in the decision to go ahead. Public Works acquires the land and supervises construction of new facilities and the treasury board has to approve the expenditure.

The federal government had expressed interest in purchasing the Brown St. arena property for use as a post office in 1976, but discussions were delayed until the town decided whether or not the Brown St. arena would be rebuilt after it was ordered closed.

About one year ago the town and the Department of Public Works came to terms on the sale of the property.

The town made a formal offer to sell to the Public

Works Department last year. The offer to sell expired in January and was extended until this April. Both parties had agreed on the sale price of \$186,000 and the town was to demolish the arena and clear the property.

In January W.D. Sauder, Manager of the Acquisition and Disposal Branch of the Public Works Department, wrote Milton Council and said an extension was granted to allow time to finalize details but he saw no problems with the deal.

On March 2 Mr. Sauder said in a letter to Milton Council, "Our project in Milton has been delayed because we have not yet determined the future use of the present post office property."

Mr. Sauder was contacted by The Champion Monday, but refused to discuss his letter or the post office situation.

Earlier this year representatives of the Public Works Department and Halton MP Frank Philbrook said the matter was in the hands of the treasury board and a decision was expected soon. At one point Dr. Philbrook had expected a decision early in January.

But in an interview Monday Bob Andras, president of the Treasury Board, said the matter had not been before the board.

"I asked about projects in this area before I left Ottawa but there was nothing mentioned about a post office in Milton. I'm sorry. It could be that the matter is in the hands of the treasury board, but it hasn't come to my desk yet," he said.

Andras was in Oakville for a speaking engagement with the Oakville Chamber of Commerce.

Meanwhile Frank Maine, Parliamentary Secretary to Jedd Buchanan, Minister of Public Works, Science, Technology and Trade was in Milton.

Milton Mayor Don Gordon said he questioned Mr. Maine about the status of the new post office for Milton.

"I told him that I understood the project had been approved by Public Works and had gone to Andras for approval.

"He says he recalled mention of the project and seemed to recall it being classified as an urgent project and thought that Buchanan had approved it. He said he would look into it," Gordon explained.

"To the best of our knowledge it was all stations go. We've met people from Public Works a number of

times and they showed us architectural sketches and floor plans for the new building," Gordon continued.

He said he felt the federal government was trying to squeeze Milton into purchasing the old post office property and taking it off their hands.

The Public Works Department had questioned the town earlier to see if there was any interest in the town buying the property.

The town replied indicating

that it would like to have the property and building as part of a town complex, but had no funds in the budget for the acquisition.

Town Treasurer Don Loughheed said the town had planned on taking approximately \$100,000 from the sale of the Brown St. property and applying it as the town's share of the cost of the new arena on Laurier Ave.

He explained that should that deal fall through, the town would take the \$100,000

of the urban capital levy fund. But he noted if that were done, it would leave the fund with only about \$60,000.

The capital levy fund is a fund developers contribute to and is usually used to offset costs of new facilities in town.

The question of a new post office has been in the works since 1972. In May of 1972 Halton MP Rud Whiting announced approval for a feasibility study had been given and an amount of \$300,000 had been allocated in the public

works budget at that time. Whiting said the study could indicate the need for a new post office or renovations and enlargements to the existing building.

"There is a good chance for a new post office in 1973 or 1974," he said.

Whiting lost the election to Tory MP Terry O'Connor in 1972. In February of 1973 O'Connor announced that there would be no post office in Milton until at least 1975.

He said he had checked on the status of the project and had been advised that the work had been planned but wasn't high enough on the priority list to warrant construction.

In November of 1974 Secretary-Manager of the Milton Chamber of Commerce Ron Harris held meetings with post office officials and announced the construction was planned for 1975 or 1976. Post office officials preferred a

downtown site but no site was selected, he said.

As early as 1972 Milton post office workers had complained about the lack of space and the substandard conditions in the Milton office.

Milton's present post office was built in 1915 at an approximate cost of \$5,000 and a large addition was added to the south and east sides in 1961.

Likely close beds

Budget ceiling poses hardship for hospital

By Linda Kirby

Milton District Hospital will be forced to tighten its belt even tighter with this year's hospital budget.

The 83-bed hospital is predicting a probable closure of 25 beds during the summer in an effort to live within the ceiling of a 4.8 per cent budget increase handed down from the Ministry of Health, Feb. 28.

"Our costs are quite likely to exceed the 4.8 budget increase, and we are going to have to take some measures to reduce our costs," stated Brian Brady, Milton District Hospital Administrator.

The hospital has closed down sections of the building before, but it is not done without difficulty, he continued.

"The workload is continuing to increase each year and that makes it difficult to reduce established positions."

Milton Hospital will be allowed a \$2,251,890 budget next year by the province, an increase of \$94,602 over the previous year.

"Milton is a growing community, with a significant increase in demand for services," he continued.

Last year saw 2,718 adult and child admissions to the hospital. An increase of 270 admissions over 1976. Newborns numbered 278 compared to last year's number of 228, according to Mr. Brady.

"It is evident with the rate increase of newborns, that more people are coming into the community..."

Bed closures will not mean reduced services he noted. "It must be emphasized

that if we do close beds, it does not mean we close services. In the past, we have never laid off staff, although we will reduce shifts and the workload. People on summer holidays are also not replaced."

The hospital budget is expected to be completed by the administration within the next month, said Mr. Brady, at which time measures will be considered to reduce the costs.

A major financial concern for the hospital centres around the termination of the anti-inflation board rules, scheduled to finish April 14. Salary negotiations are due this year for both CUPE workers and nurses at the hospital. The hospital presently has 75 full time staff and 95 part time staff.

A continual rise of activities in the various hospital departments makes it difficult to even attempt to cut back, he said.

"Everyone knew the increase was not going to be very high, but this year is going to be more difficult than the last year."

In addition to expected salary increases, supplies for the hospital are also costing more. An estimated eight per cent increase in the cost of equipment and supplies is expected for the year. Already, prices for sutures have risen 12 per cent, he noted.

"We really want to be able to continue where we are now," he stated, noting expansion of services could not be anticipated for several years, despite signs of a

growing need to provide more services.

Outpatient services are probably the biggest concern in terms of expansion, he said, adding there is a definite need for more lab facilities to deal with out-patients.

"There is certainly no sign of levelling or decreasing number of out-patients in need of services."

"Although the need is there, the earliest time we could expect to see such expansion would be between three and five years."

Along with the need for outpatient services, the hospital is in the process of applying for provincial assistance for a new program for a care unit at the hospital.

"An initial proposal has been sent in, with an outline of the hospital's need for monitoring equipment to deal with coronary patients and acutely ill patients, he stated. The care unit would require approximately \$120,000 to operate. The hospital now has a similar unit in Room 207, said Mr. Brady, to deal with such problems.

The program is submitted for the 1979 fiscal year. No expansion or additional service plans were submitted this year, he said, owing to the ministry's restraint policy.

In a news release to hospitals Minister of Health Dennis Timbrell stated increases in funds for operating budgets would be limited in the next two years.

The proposed care unit would be funded separately from operating costs, stated Mr. Brady.



"YOU'VE GOT TO FLY LIKE AN EAGLE". Hot doggers were out in force Thursday at Glen Eden Ski Hills at Kelso Conservation Area. The warm sunshine and excellent conditions of the slopes made for a perfect day for showing off. (Champion photo by Peter McCusker)

\$215,000

OHIP increase hits taxpayers

Increases in the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) fees announced recently will cost Halton taxpayers \$215,000 to cover increased costs for benefit packages for employees of the region and the four area municipalities.

The benefit package for Halton regional employees alone will jump by \$95,000 a year. The increase in Burlington will be \$60,000 a year, in Oakville \$41,000 per year, in Halton Hills \$10,000 and in Milton about \$9,000. All of those employees are

covered for semi-private rooms. The region and four area councils all pay 100 per cent of the cost for the package.

The Halton Board of Education will not feel the impact of the 37 per cent OHIP increase immediately. The collective agreement with the teachers and other unionized employees sets out a dollar figure, not percentage the board will pick up.

The employees will have to absorb the increase unless something different is negotiated in new contracts.

Runaway train kills three at Hydro site

By Linda Kirby

A freak industrial accident killed three construction workers Tuesday morning when an unmanned train engine slipped into gear and plowed into four small trucks parked on the railroad ties. The 8 a.m. accident occurred at an Ontario Hydro job site between Eighth and Ninth Line, east of Trafalgar Rd. on Britannia Rd.

Train engineer Victor R. Newcombe, 55 of 1380 Olgar Dr., Burlington had stepped out of the locomotive to get a coffee, along with several other construction workers, police said.

Approximately 24 workers were gathered at the site, around a coffee vending truck

parked with three other trucks on the tracks, when the engine rolled forward crashing into the trucks and men.

Mr. Newcombe and Jose Carrelas 52, of 26 Clinton St., Toronto were killed instantly. The name of third dead victim has not been released by Halton Regional Police, pending notification of the next of kin.

L. Reed of Toronto was treated and released from Milton District Hospital.

The workers, all employed with Penvidic Contracting, Burlington were working on a spur line to move heavy equipment necessary for Ontario Hydro's new 500 kV substation. The company owns the train.

According to Regional Police, the trucks were used by trucks travelling into the construction site, due to muddy conditions. Both Halton Police and Ministry of Labor officials are investigating the accident.

\$300,000 project

Indian village development

A complete Indian Village will be recreated on the site of an early village at Crawford Lake Conservation Area on

An inquest will be held, stated Lou Woodcock, Ministry of Labor official, "and an investigation will be carried out to investigate all aspects of the accident to see what regulations were broken."

Steeles Ave. south of Campbellville, Halton Region Conservation Authority announced this week. The early village was found during university studies on the former Howard farm, just north of Crawford Lake, a few years ago. Its development plus roads, parking lots, a gate house and an educational interpretive centre will cost approximately \$300,000, according to William Warwick, Director of Conservation Services at HRCA.

He outlined the proposal to Milton Council on Monday, as the town will later be asked to issue permits and through its association with HRCA, will

a letter.

Noting many of the "more vocal" opponents to OHC housing were not present at Monday's meeting, pro-OHC Councillor Art Melanson moved the motion allowing the project to proceed, with the necessary rezoning.

The majority of councillors voted with him.

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Smoke detector saves Campbellville family

A smoke detector is credited with helping a Campbellville family escape death in a fiery blaze that destroyed almost half of the seven-year-old country home on Second Line, Campbellville, Wednesday, Mar. 8.

Designed by its owner, Gerald O'Connor, the home included four fire extinguishers, two smoke detectors and exits from both the upstairs bedrooms and downstairs family room.

Smoke was first noticed by his eight-year-old daughter, Shannon, said Mr. O'Connor. "My wife thought it was perhaps a log on the fireplace not burning properly and threw it out."

"She got suspicious however, when it continued to be smoky, and went upstairs to check it out. When she heard the smoke detector going, she realized it was bad and got the kids and herself out of the house."

Mr. O'Connor was attending a meeting in Brantford at the time of the fire. "They barely got out, before the whole place was ablaze."

Charred ruins of one section of the house including the children's bedroom indicated little had been saved. Water and smoke ruined the remaining parts of the home, with only a few pictures and knick-knacks left unharmed by the sudden fire.

The cause of the fire is still under investigation by Milton

Fire Department, but no reason has yet been found. "It is causing the fire department some wondering, and I am certainly puzzled," he stated.

"They should certainly be congratulated for their work, however. They were just great, and did everything possible. Both the Milton and Campbellville divisions tried to save the place," he continued.

Although there is little left of their family possessions, including many refinished antiques, Mr. O'Connor remains optimistic.

Work on repairing and

reconstruction of the house is expected to get underway this week, and neighbors have been of considerable help in looking after the family in the meantime, he noted.

"People are just great, and very helpful."

Both children, Shannon and her nine-year-old brother, Erin are staying with friends, and his wife Susan and Mr. O'Connor are staying with neighbors until rental accommodation is found.

No estimate has been placed on the damage to the house, but an investigation continues to determine the cause behind the blaze.

Borland on board

Paul Borland, owner of Borland's Photo Centre on Main St. and Borland's Foto Factory on Wilson Dr., has been named to the board of management of the Milton Downtown Improvement Area.

He replaces plumber Charles Fay, a charter board member, who resigned on Feb. 20 because he could not attend daytime meetings, due to his job commitments. His resignation was accepted, with regret.

Mr. Borland is a former chairman of the Milton Downtown Group.



PAUL BORLAND



son, while the Flyers bow out of the playoffs in four games — 3-1 to 0-3.