

Fear disturbance by 'city folk'

Neighbors oppose Crawford Lake development

By Olga Darcovich
Rural residents opposing development of Crawford Lake Conservation Area made it clear they want no city people disturbing their way of life.

Appealing a decision by the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) granting Halton Region Conservation Authority (HRCA) a development permit to construct an interpretive centre in the park, the residents told hearing officer David Jamieson they feared development would attract the city hordes. More than a dozen people attended the hearing in Milton last week.

"We don't want city folk coming in, we're country people," said Darlene Newell. "We don't want to be disturbed; we're happy the way we are."
They want the park, which has been severely vandalized, kept in its natural state. Commenting that being able to walk barefoot is what country life is about, Mrs. Newell said she was afraid to take the children to Crawford Lake because they might cut their feet on the broken beer bottles littering the area. One neighbor, Russell

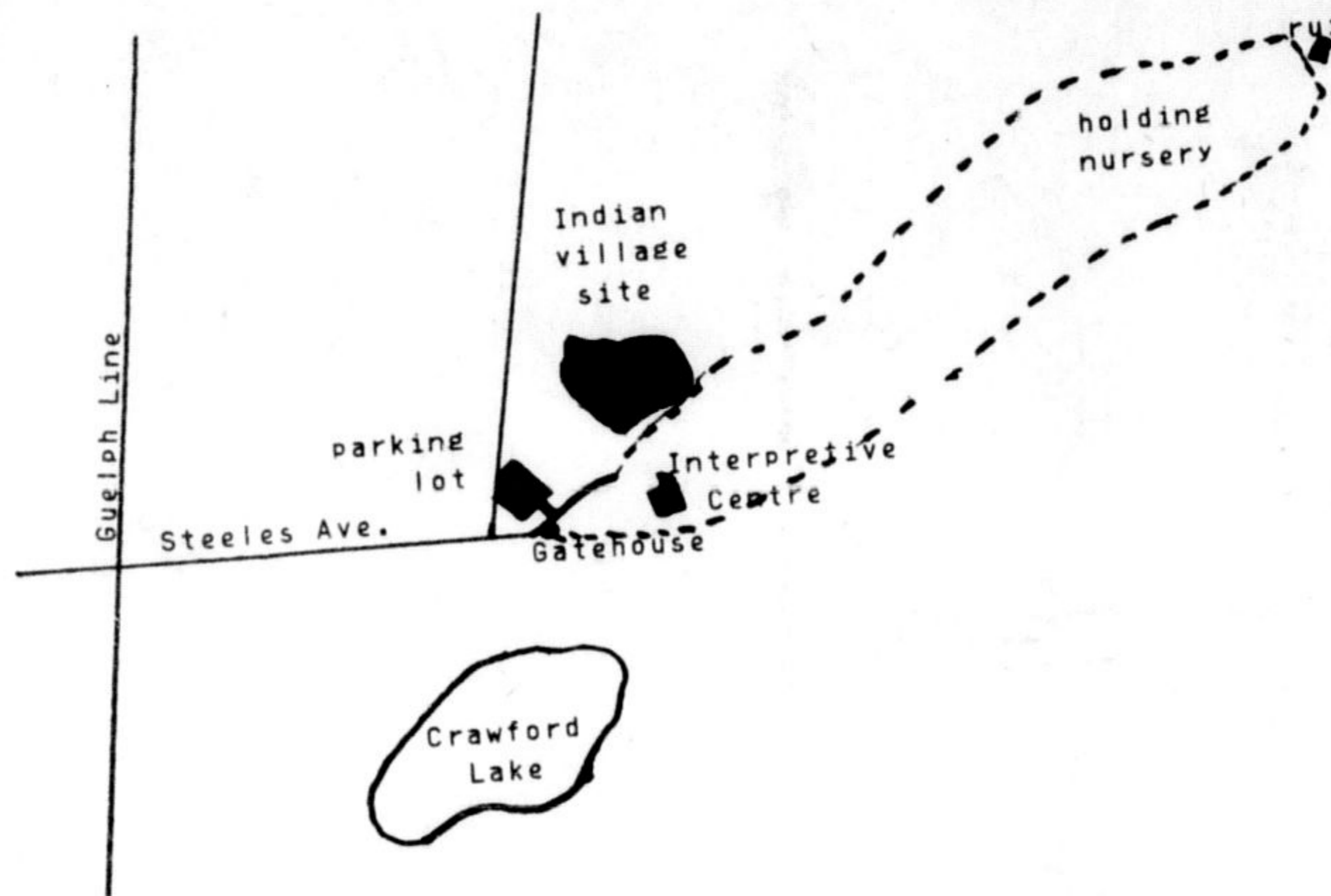
Hurren, recommended the property be put up for sale to the highest bidder, arguing private owners would take better care of it.

Mrs. Newell, and others, objected to the NEC decision on several grounds — increased traffic, noise, decreased property values and increased taxes. They maintained HRCA was not living up to its mandate to conserve and protect.

Traffic tie-ups on Guelph Line in Campbellville, Milton Heights corner and Five Side road were cited as evidence conservation areas (Mountsberg, Kelso and Hilton Falls) created traffic problems.

"In contrast to opponents' fears that thousands of people would deluge the neighborhood, HRCA Director of Conservation Services Bill Warwick said his concern was that attendance would not meet expectations and anticipated revenue would not be forthcoming.

The interpretive centre is planned as an educational facility bringing an estimated four busloads of students a day. Ninety per cent of the students served would be from the region, Mr. Warwick



CONSTRUCTION of an interpretive centre and an Indian Village have been proposed for Crawford Lake Conservation Area. The dead end of Steeles Ave. has been recommended as the entrance to the park. But neighbors on Steeles Ave. are opposed to development of the park and have appealed a decision by the Niagara Escarpment Commission granting the conservation authority a development permit to construct the interpretive centre.

added. The public would be encouraged to come only on weekends. Parking provisions would be limited to

about 200 cars. However, opponents argued that nearby Mountsberg Wildlife Centre already had an interpretive centre.

Mrs. Newell, who claimed Mountsberg was not kept up, said private parks were better maintained than public ones. When asked by the

hearing officer which private parks she was referring to, she replied: "Everywhere."

The authority was charged with being a poor neighbor for allowing the Crawford Lake property to deteriorate. None of the buildings which had been on the property when it was acquired remain, having been destroyed by vandals.

Said Grant Russell, who, like others speaking in opposition, lives on Steeles Ave.: "When they took over the property in '69 they could have been good neighbors and taken steps then to protect it. So there's no reason to believe they will be good neighbors now."

Mr. Warwick acknowledged the vandalism problem and said the gatehouse should eliminate unwanted visitors. But Mrs. Newell objected to an entrance fee. "People shouldn't have to pay to see nature."

Residents also protested the park being fenced off by chain link fencing, saying it only kept the neighbors out. They added vandalism has been virtually eliminated since a night guard was posted, but Mr. Warwick said HRCA won't be able to continue the night guard much longer. He explained the fence was put up, at the request of police, to define the property and make it possible to lay a trespassing charge if needed.

Among the five residents who spoke at the hearing was Milton Councillor Jim Watson, who sits on the Conservation Authority. Mr. Watson, an opponent of plans to develop the park all along, said the influx of visitors would have a devastating effect on neighbors.

Claiming development would destroy property values Randall DeGaris said he paid a premium price for his property four years ago because he wanted to get away from the city and live in the country.

Russell Hurren, whose farm abuts the former Howard farm, now the proposed site for the interpretive centre, estimated his property value had decreased by one-third to a half since HRCA acquired the adjoining acreage, but, on questioning by Mr. Jamieson, admitted he had not had his property assessed.

The Chief of Police is called upon to make his presence in the divisions more obvious. And finally there is an appeal for a closer working relationship between the police commission, the administration and the association in the policy making of the force.

Mr. Hurren also was concerned about vandalism, which he said spilled over onto his property. "Anything of value to so-called conservationists is picked up and carted away," he commented adding that city people believe they have "the God-given right," when they come to the rural area, to take anything away with them.

His objection to the fencing was that it's on the wrong side of the road. He would like it on his property to keep people out of it.

In handing down its decision the Niagara Escarpment Commission also wanted to be reassured the area would be protected, said NEC planner Marion Plaunt. That is why the commission dealt only with the construction of the interpretive centre and its uses, not with other phases of the master plan.

The interpretive centre would comply with the objectives of the commission, she said. Other components of the plan may not and the NEC wanted to reserve the opportunity to review each separately at a later date.

Ms. Plaunt said although she agreed with many of the comments made, she foresaw no problem in using the area for educational purposes, provided it was properly managed.

The interpretive centre would be located some 200 feet north of Steeles Ave., and 1,200 feet from the lake itself, Mr. Warwick said in reviewing development plans. Reconstruction of an Indian village, called for in the master plan, would be under the direction of University of Western Ontario archaeologists. The site would contain two longhouses and be protected by a palisade. Within the fenced area, two or three educational digs would be carried out annually for a period of 10 years. The hearing officer's report and recommendation will go to the Minister of Housing where a final decision is made.

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(Continued from page 7)
tration use an office building? The Chief probably figured that one day he'd make an arrest and he would need the cells close by!"

"We have a man in the region trained in bomb work. He has no equipment, but if a bomb does come up we'll call him and he'll confirm our suspicions that it's a bomb. In that way we won't give Peel Regional Bomb Squad any false calls!"

"Instead of us asking Peel Police for the use of their dogs or bomb squads, why not have the Chief do it? Then we won't suffer the embarrassment of asking."

"Many personnel on the force still have not met the Chief since regionalization."

"Traffic in all towns in Halton is getting very heavy and we need a better set of roof lights and sirens. Ambulance and fire are trusted with them, but why not police? It seems that police are just to be seen and not heard."

"Promotions are not made according to Force procedure. The rank and file start to get the feeling that they must follow the rules or be punished, but the Administration will only follow them if it is to their advantage."

"The fact that a Force of our size can afford to have an inspector working full time investigating members of the Force, during this time of the 'Austerity Program' would lead one to believe that there is something the matter with the priorities of the Force."

"I am referring to supervision over the whole force. How many times have we heard it said, 'Milton does it different from Oakville. Oakville does it different from Burlington. Burlington does it different from every body.' We are supposed to be one force. We know it is not."

"I believe what I am trying to get across is the fact we have these problems and have had them for four years with no improvement. It also would appear that we are not going to get any improvement in the future as all we hear is cuts in the budget. It is no wonder that the officers have a low morale or become frustrated when they have to work under these conditions."

"Police work is a very involved business in both technical and human terms. It is a costly business which should not be subject to budget cuts and austerity moves."

What the Police Assoc. would like to see happen

The Halton Police Association is recommending several changes be made in the present set up.

If we could get all those recommendations, it would be one big step for Halton Region, police association president Al Ruelens said Monday, but he continued: "That's inconceivable."

The association is calling for one central police building for each of the three districts, and that these structures be designed and equipped to suit the needs of police.

The only police building in Halton, according to the report, is used to house the administration at Oakville. The report suggests switching the Oakville division into that building and putting the administration in the other building.

The report also calls for moving the north district's headquarters to Milton from Georgetown. And putting the Acton officers into the Georgetown station.

Consideration is also asked about splitting the north into a Milton and Halton Hills district so that along with

Burlington and Oakville there would be four districts instead of the present three.

Promotions are to take place within 30 days of postings.

New men be hired. That officers leaving because of retirement or resignation be replaced immediately.

That Fraud, Rape and Sex Offenders Squads be set up plus a Bomb Squad.

There is a call for the resumption of in-service training and also for a continuing flow of information on new legislation.

The police also want their equipment to be of higher quality.

In a step away from current practice, officers called for the equipping of cruisers with electronic sirens. Cruisers should also have a bar light, or seal beam light system.

Among other recommendations they call for adoption of the Erin patrol jacket and open neck shirts for summer wear.

They also would like to see a bank of new vehicles to replace old ones which pass the 60,000 mile mark. An immediate study should be undertaken to reduce unnecessary duplication of

Downtown treasure chests

Efforts to revitalize downtown Milton continue as Colin Best, summer student with the Downtown Business Improvement Group, continues to plan new ideas.

"Treasure Chest Days" is a likely happening, as downtown merchants get together to plan a contest for shoppers.

In an attempt to attract more people to the downtown core area, each merchant will provide his own "treasure" and offer customers the opportunity to try out a key to fit a chest. Should the customer be fortunate enough to choose the correct key to fit the chest, he will win the prize, explained Mr. Best.

The idea is still in the planning stages, but is likely to take place before the summer is out, said Mr. Best.

As co-ordinator for a number of weekly events in the downtown area, Mr. Best said he is noticing a trend of more people visiting the area.

The recently introduced flea market, stationed each Saturday at the old fire hall is a

success, he said, and is growing each week.

He attributes the success to advertising in a number of papers in the area and around Toronto, which has brought buyers and vendors from a variety of locations.

The last flea market had 19 vendors participating, he said, selling a range of articles from antiques to pottery and pictures.

"We are getting people in all the time, so there is a constant turnover in the items being sold," he said.

The combination of a farmers' market and a flea market each Saturday morning is definitely helping to bring more people to the area, he continued.

"Our aim is to try to get people to go to the farmers' market early Saturday morning, then wander through the downtown stores and over to the flea market."

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