



COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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How will it look?

People who lived in places that weren't as big and, well, ugly as Mississauga used to say that they didn't want their communities to develop that way.

In the past few years there has been a lot of talk about building more neighbourly towns that were supposed to represent an about-face from the drab and cluttered suburban sprawl that the Mississauga bashers feared.

Yet where do we see that happening?

In Oakville, immediately to our south? Not really. In fact Oakville is growing at a furious clip and, to be truthful, is looking more and more like Mississauga every day.

Lip service is paid to creating newly liveable neighbourhoods by revamping house facades and putting garages in the back instead of front, but the homes going up in Oakville represent pretty much the same suburban sprawl as in Mississauga.

This is important for Milton because it appears that the ducks are finally, tantalizingly, almost all in a row to have Milton grow again.

Last week, with very little fanfare, the so-called 'big pipe' growth plan sailed through a joint committee hearing at Halton Region. The same is likely to happen tomorrow at the full regional council meeting.

So now, after more than a decade of waiting for something, anything to happen, it looks as if Milton is on the brink of joining all the other fast-growing centres surrounding Toronto proper.

What will the new Milton look like?

Given that developers must underwrite the costs for building a pipeline to support expansion, the new homes in Milton aren't going to be cheap. That probably means bigger houses on smaller lots.

But even with the drag of paying for the pipeline developers have a golden opportunity to do something if not unique, at least praiseworthy in expanding Milton.

They have the opportunity to create more user-friendly neighbourhoods, plan more effectively, make the communities they fashion more distinct than so many of the surrounding suburbs.

For example to Milton's immediate west, toward the Niagara Escarpment, an outstanding community could be created in the shadow of one of Ontario's most prominent landmarks, and only minutes from the downtown core.

Milton does not have a great planning history. There are buildings too close to the road, strip malls with inadequate parking, industrial firms uneasily close to subdivisions.

But here is a chance to, if not start again, at least re-think some things. Milton as it stands, despite its flaws, is a very liveable, pleasant community. The question now is, over the next 10 years or so, how much will that change?

Rob Kelly



OUR READERS WRITE

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

Foxfire bigger than monstrous

Dear Editor:

The opening statement that "Tim Kingsbury will quit while he's ahead" leaves this father of eight with mixed emotions.

Truly Tim has served as Ward 1 and 3 Public School trustee over the past three years to the best of his abilities, serving the parents and students of Halton to improve the quality of education. I know that countless number of hours are required in order to fulfill that mandate, and Tim has worked hard and performed well in sometimes difficult situations. I know that Tim has been on the right side of many a difficult issue facing the board since 1994, and I congratulate him on a job well done. However, Tim and I have not always been on the same wavelength, in fact I could say that we have agreed to disagree on only one topic -- Foxfire. In the article Mr. Kingsbury maintains that the Foxfire complaints "caused more frustration for Milton District High School's parent council than they did for Mr. Kingsbury. That whole issue wouldn't be on my top ten list (of frustrating moments). It's not a monstrous issue," he said.

Yeah right! And I have some ocean front property for sale in Alberta. The Foxfire issue had such a tremendous impact and became such a monstrous issue that Earl Manners, the president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, found it necessary to issue a special OSSTF Critical Issues Series Monograph #10 Circular

dated March 27, 1997, warning members to be vigilant over course interference from parents, to be prepared to fight, to stay calm and to beware of rash or ill-considered actions. (Spectator, April 22/97)

But lets agree and assume that Tim Kingsbury is right and that Earl Manners is wrong -- that it was not a monstrous issue. All four of Halton's MPPs together with Mr. John Snobelen, the Minister of Education and Training, and nearly 1,300 Halton residents respectfully requested Kingsbury to remove Foxfire. Snobelen said he thought the American gang novel was inappropriate as it portrays graphic sex and violence. Terence Young, MPP Halton Centre: "It is an absolute disgrace that people in a position of trust would foist pornography on our youth." The fact that Kingsbury would turn down the request from nearly 1,300 Halton voters (many more than the number of votes Kingsbury received in the November 1994 municipal election is overwhelming evidence that his decision to "quit while he's ahead" is the correct decision.

Manners claims the right for teachers to select resources, and parents have no rights to impose their views of Foxfire on the system. Student and teacher rights take priority over the rights of parents. If Manners' line of thinking is representative of the Federation's upper echelon, our education system is in deeper trouble than anyone could have imagined, and John Snobelen truly has his work cut out.

Jack Huisman
Campbellville

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Pud

by Steve Nease

