

Signs are looking good for this business owner

By IRENE GENTLE

The Champion

Call it a sign of the times.

Steve Miller of Mill Town Tire learned what a difference a year makes when he returned to square off against Milton council in a longstanding sign squabble.

Mr. Miller applied last December for relief from a sign bylaw in order to have the sign of choice installed outside his 675 Steeles Ave. E. business.

At the time council refused his request.

His return to council recently resulted in a heated debate among councillors on procedure, precedent, and the perception that council hobbles local businesses with red tape.

In the end council upheld the previous decision — largely due to zoning changes to the area proposed by the municipal official growth plan. The plan was not in place at last December's meeting.

The original dust-up was over a proposed sign that was too intrusive for the bylaw covering the property. That would be too

high, too close to the property line and permitting too much advertising.

Mr. Miller was hoping to erect a nine square metre, freestanding illuminated sign, much of which would be used to advertise product carried by the business.

This was not in compliance with bylaws for the Steeles Avenue-Harrop Drive area, which is slotted as both residential and industrial zones.

According to the bylaw, industrial signs can be used for identification purposes only. Recently, Mr. Miller returned to spar again.

"The sign I actually wanted to put up did not go through. We had to make some adjustments to it and that's not what I'd like," he told council. "I'd like to have the sign I'd like, basically."

The sign he asked for is no different from others in the area, he said.

That was corroborated by Ward 4 Councillor Ron Furik, who popped over to the property to take the measurements himself.

"I have a problem that we can't treat him the same as we treat his neighbor on the other side," said Mr. Furik. "Let's give the

guy what he wants. What's the problem?"

A ray of hope was offered to Mr. Miller courtesy of Milton's new official plan for growth.

In the plan, the Mill Town Tire property is in a designated business, not industrial, area. A suggestion by Ward 4 Councillor John Challinor that the issue be referred back to Town staff for study was opposed by Ward 2 Councillor Wally Hunter.

"I'm not in favour. I don't see why we're sitting around discussing this. We're micro-managing this issue," he said. "This is what gives council a bad name in the business community."

Councillor Barry Lee also favoured immediate action over waiting for a staff report on the matter.

"I just want to inform council that I'm getting a headache. Mill Town Tire may not even need a sign after all this," he said. "I think we should get on with it. I also think we should go back and review the sign issue in the area."

Eventually, council opted to grant Mr. Miller relief from the current bylaw.

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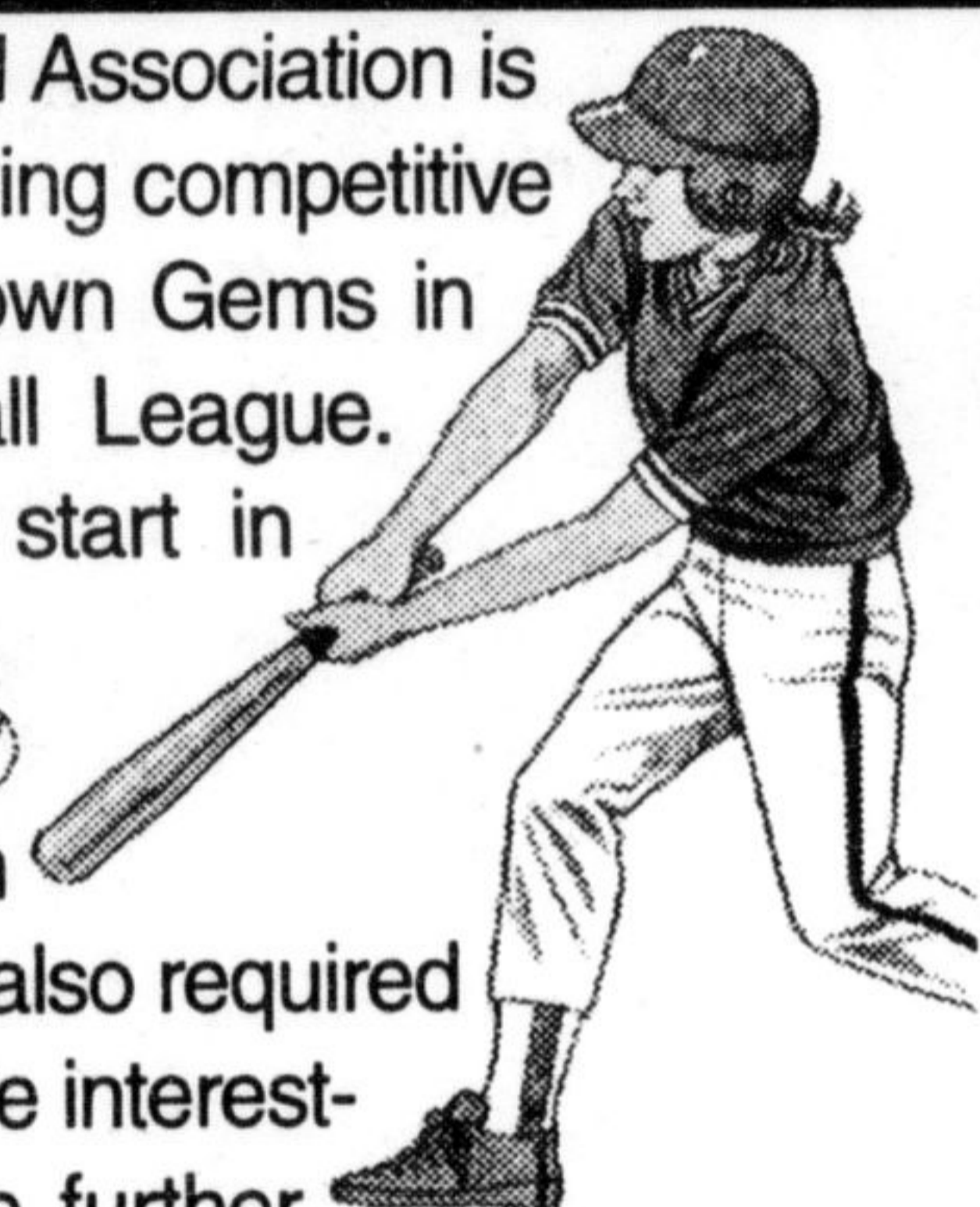
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