

Agencies 'all over the board' on development bid: Krantz

By IRENE GENTLE
The Champion

The battle lines are drawn in preparation for a joint board hearing over protected Milton lands at the foot of the Niagara Escarpment.

But a lack of consensus among Halton Region, the Town of Milton and the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) will complicate the issue, predicted Mayor Gord Krantz.

"The odd part of it is these agencies are all over the board on it," he noted.

Each group is free to act as a commenting agency at the hearing, set for November.

It will determine if four parcels of land adding up to 179 hectares should be deleted from the protective Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP).

Applications to exit the NEP have been submitted by Jannock Properties, John Grant and the numbered company 825927 Ontario Inc.

Their combined lands are bordered by Bronte Road to the east, Tremaine Road to the west, and Main street to the south. They then veer north towards Milton Heights on the CPR line.

Milton council was first to weigh in about one year ago in a vote that

few seem to clearly recall.

What is known is the result: Council decided that the lands would automatically roll into the Milton Official Plan if the board releases them from the NEP.

That would allow them to be built on.

It is also known that the discussion was not controversial enough to require a recorded vote.

But it is heating up now.

Last Thursday, the NEC voted in favor of keeping all four properties under the NEP.

And regional council voted the week before to allow most of one property to exit the plan, while keeping the others under protection.

The public has also waded in, sending reams of letters and petitions to councillors and the NEC.

As a voting member of Town and regional councils as well as the NEC, Mr. Krantz has consistently come out in support of the Milton position.

At the Region, he was the only one of Milton's three elected representatives to do so.

But he insisted that his vote should not be taken to mean he is against escarpment preservation.

"I think the escarpment, and even the lead-up, should be protected," he said. "But where is that?"

And the Milton decision has to

be looked at in context, said Mr. Krantz.

The vote was cast before an official plan had been drawn up. The decision to start the first phase of development in Milton's southeast quadrant had not yet been made.

The Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Business Improvement Association were lobbying council to extend the downtown core by developing in the west.

"The majority of us were looking at options," said Mr. Krantz. "We were looking at anything and or everything."

His vote to free all four properties from the NEP is a vote against fragmentary planning, he said.

"Is piecemeal planning good planning?" he asked. "I think not."

But Mr. Krantz said he will accept the joint board's ruling.

"Whatever decision is made, I can live with it," he said. "It won't have me going to the top of the escarpment and jumping over."

Milton and regional Councillor Rick Malboeuf also has trouble recalling the specifics of the local vote.

But times have changed since it was cast, and so have some minds, said Mr. Malboeuf.

He has publicly stated that he is among the converted. So has

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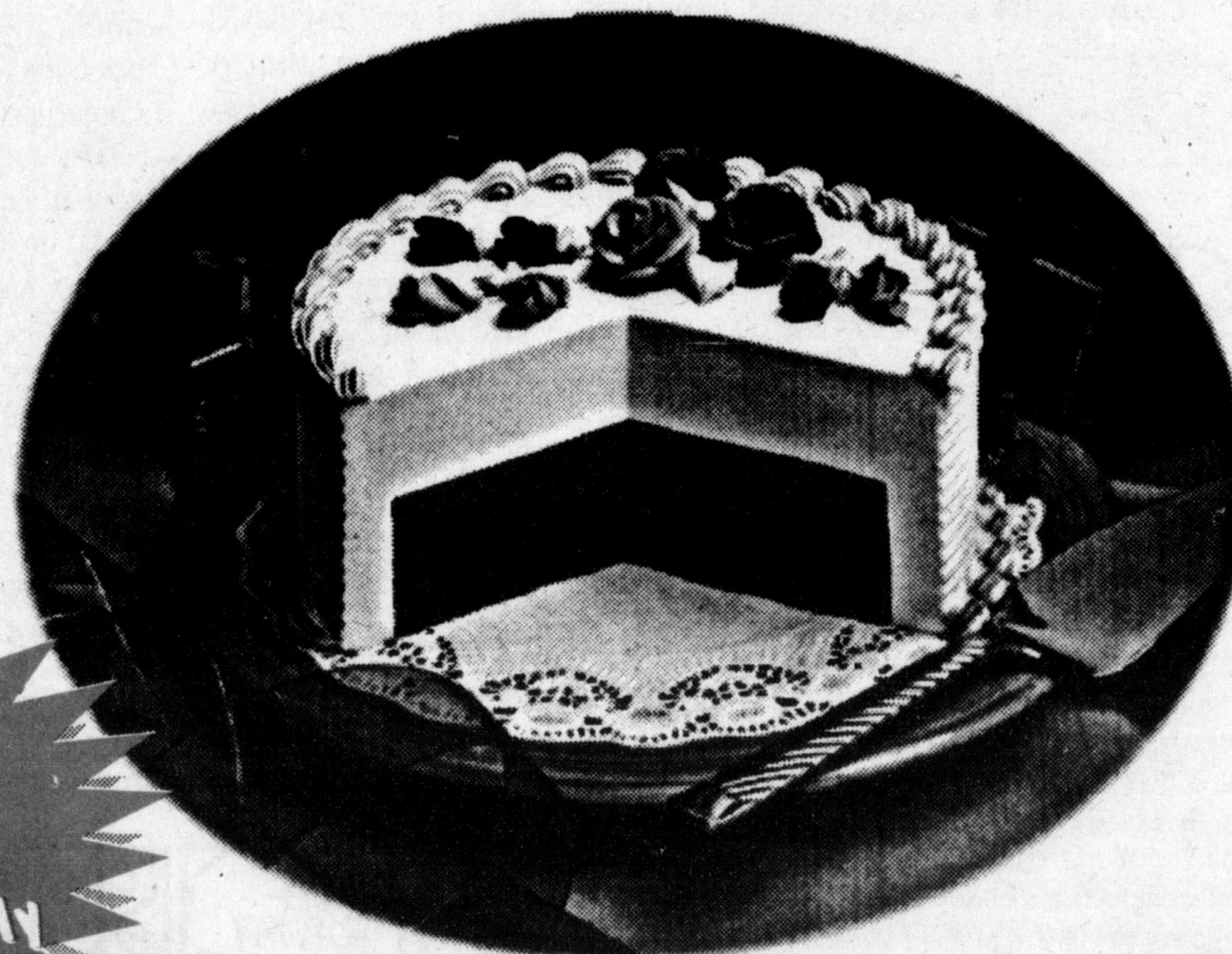
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