

**Facing up to 70 applications**

# Region to review policy on golf courses

BY IRENE GENTLE

The Champion

A string of ground-guzzling golf courses in the region has spurred Halton staff to review its current policies.

Today, justification studies showing there's a demand for the course can go a long way in bringing it to Halton lands.

**"If there were that many golf courses it would completely ruin our agriculture. We want to look at a sensible golf course policy."**

**PAT MURPHY**

And that's easy enough to do, since a shortage in the Greater Toronto Area is putting pressure on the Region to succumb to applications for up to 70 new golf courses, said the Region's commissioner of planning and public works Pat Murphy.

"There's a demand," he said.

But if the Region doesn't take a look at its policies, land ideally reserved for agriculture may be gobbled up by the sprawling courses.

"If there were that many golf courses it would completely ruin our agriculture," said Mr. Murphy. "We want to look at a sensible golf course policy."

Currently, 31 golf courses eat up about 2,000 hectares of land in Halton.

That would at least double if all the new applications were to be permitted.

Water is also an issue.

As it stands, the Ministry of Environment grants water permits, but doesn't monitor the amount taken in by the courses.

That means there's no record of how much water they consume to remain lush and green.

So the Region will be taking a look at the overall picture to determine "whether or not the cumulative effects of all the water is drawing down the level," said Mr. Murphy.

Water has come to the fore as an issue in the last few years, which have been characterized by hot dry summers. Scant rain or snow has led to whispers of 'drought'.

But the biggest issue is still land, said Mr. Murphy.

When writing up its policies, the Region had intended to keep golf courses off prime agricultural lands by corralling them above the escarpment brow.

It's still a good idea, but it isn't happening, said Mr. Murphy.

"We thought we'd get them in Nassagaweya but we haven't," he said.

Instead, only five of Halton's 31 courses are located above the escarpment brow.

And new golf courses are on the way. Approvals were given to three new courses last year, all below the escarpment in lands deemed agricultural rural.

That means they are meant to be preserved for primarily agricultural purposes.

And applications keep rolling in to place courses in Halton's best farm lands, said Mr. Murphy.

"Golf course development is very expensive. If you do it on good, deep soil, it makes it cheaper," explained Mr. Murphy. "Also, our prime land is closer to the prime market area."

The study is expected to wrap up in May.

If top Halton lands are proven to be endangered by the current policy, changes will have to be made to the regional and municipal official plans.

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## Dateline

• from DATELINE on page 14  
Guild for its **Quilt Show** at the Halton Hills Cultural Centre Gallery, 9 Church St., in Georgetown. Admission is free. The show is closed Mondays.

**Wednesday Jan. 19**  
**Milton Wheels to Meals** hosts a luncheon in the Loblaws Community Room at 11:30 p.m. Transportation and assistance can be arranged. Tickets cost \$5. For more information, call Mary at 878-6699.

The **La Leche League of Milton** meets at the CHERISH Family Resource Centre, 540 Childs Dr., at 8 p.m. A discussion on the advantages of breastfeeding is led by accredited leaders. Everyone is welcome. For details, call 876-0772, 878-6387 or 876-3322.

People who suffer from **anxiety or panic attacks** can join an ongoing support group, Wednesdays from 7 to 9 p.m. For more information, call 693-8771.

**Earth and Me**, a program for children aged 3-and-a-half to 5 years old, helps little ones learn about the earth and the environment with lots of hands-on activities. The educational program takes place from 1 to 3 p.m. For more information, call the Milton Community Resource Centre at 876-1244, ext. 12.

**Thursday Jan. 20**  
Milton District High School hosts a free seminar entitled **Achieve a Healthy Weight** at 7 p.m. Speakers include Dr. R. Aronson, endocrinologist, occupational therapist, dietitian and kinesiologist. Displays and refreshments are available from 6:30 p.m. To reserve a seat or for more information, call 338-4370.

The **Milton Historical Society** hosts its general meeting at 7:30 p.m. at Hugh Foster Hall. Anyone interested is welcome to attend.  
Men and women are invited to a **full moon healing circle** from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Call Elizabeth at 878-4952 for details.

**Hey Kids,** **WIN!**

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