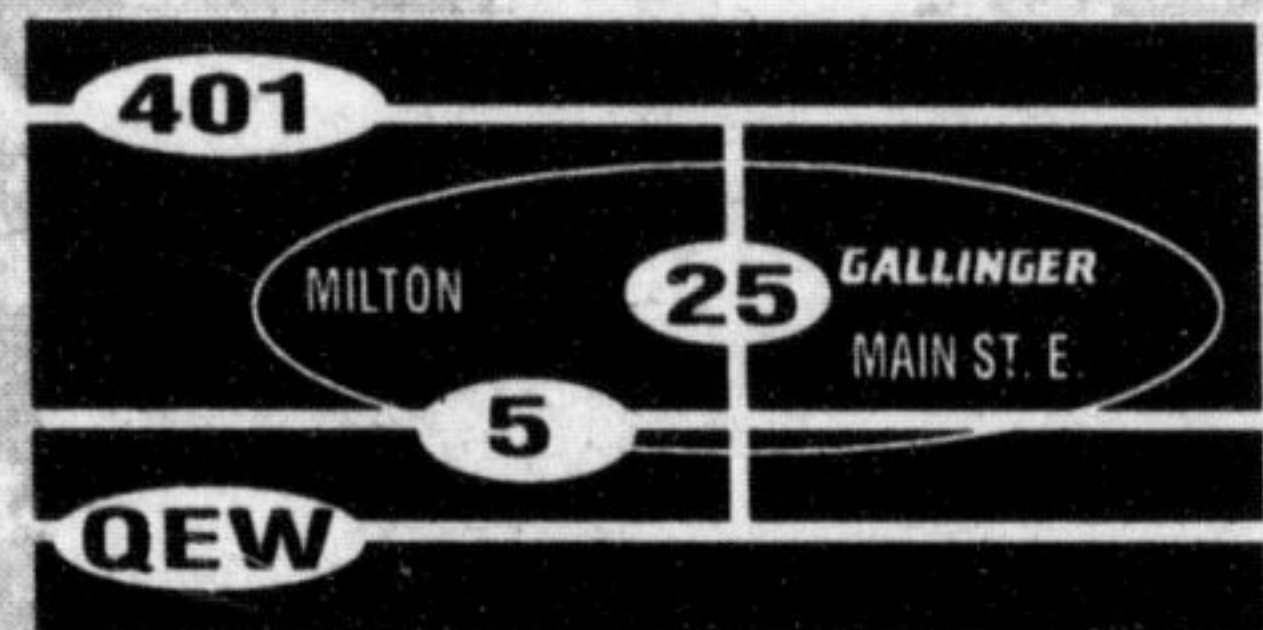


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Golf course approved at council

By IRENE GENTLE

The Champion

Below par farm fields fronting Trafalgar Road helped pave the way for a proposed 18-hole public golf course at last week's town council meeting.

The proposed course would sit on 155 acres of land between Derry and Britannia roads.

The fields are deemed agricultural, but were judged less than ideal for farm use by the Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee (HAAC), said Councillor Barry Lee.

"The land was described as very awkward to farm, and some of it couldn't be farmed," he said. "HAAC" looked at it in detail and didn't think it was a highly productive farm."

Despite that, Town staff advised council to reject the application put forth by Kaneff Properties Ltd., citing issues around environmental sensitivity, excessive water taking and a failure of a golf course to fit into the overall design of Milton's official plan.

But councillors heard a different story from Kaneff representative Glenn Schnarr.

He said improved technology and current design practices could alleviate any lingering worries.

"Golf course development today is a lot different than it was even several years ago," he said. "The industry has come a long way."

In the end, council opted to approve the application on the condition that outstanding concerns of the Region, the Town and other interested parties be resolved.

It also directed that a hold be put on the property until water-taking requirements by the Ministry of Environment (MOE) are met.

Improvements such as drought-resistant turf and decreased uses of pesticides and herbicides make new courses more environmentally friendly than they've been in the past, said Mr. Schnarr.

And he noted the Kaneff course would boast a water-drawing technique that wouldn't allow the Sixteen Mile Creek to be touched until water levels reach a certain height.

"We have no access to water unless the flows are high," said Mr. Schnarr.

"No one else at the creek has a system that even approaches this. This is the new standard."

In a drought year, the course would have the capacity to store 98 per cent of its water needs on-site, he added.

But that didn't convince Ian Jamieson, whose property borders on the subject lands.

"I'm a little hesitant to say what I want to say after hearing Mr. Schnarr's polished and articulate presentation," he remarked. "I now understand why so many of his projects go through."

Mr. Jamieson argued that the land is in good shape and the area is agricultural in nature.

"Any way you kick it, that's what's happening," he said. "I am totally against the proposal. I agree with your own planning department."

But with water and agricultural use addressed, some councillors appeared smitten with the prospect of a public course near town.

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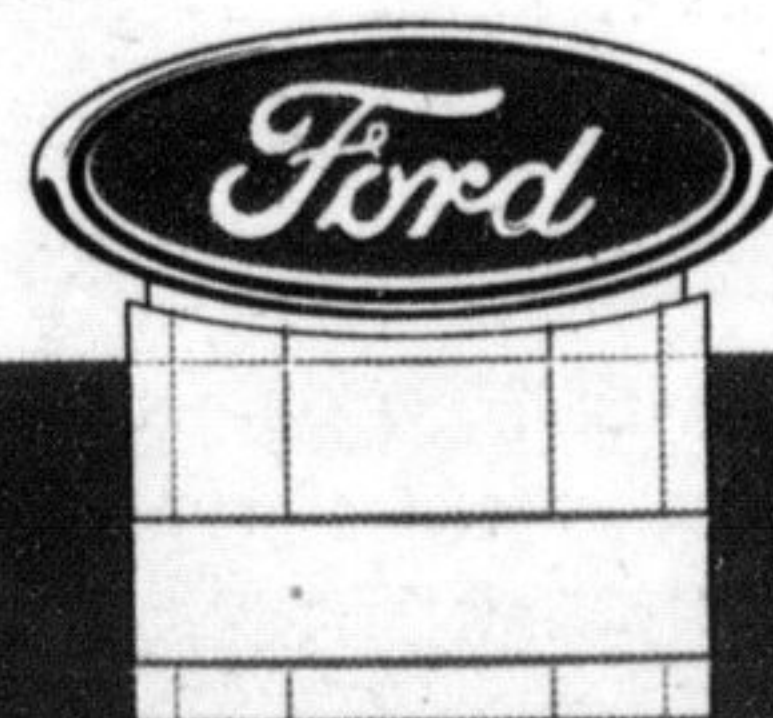
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