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 Sun. Nov. 26
 2:00 p.m.



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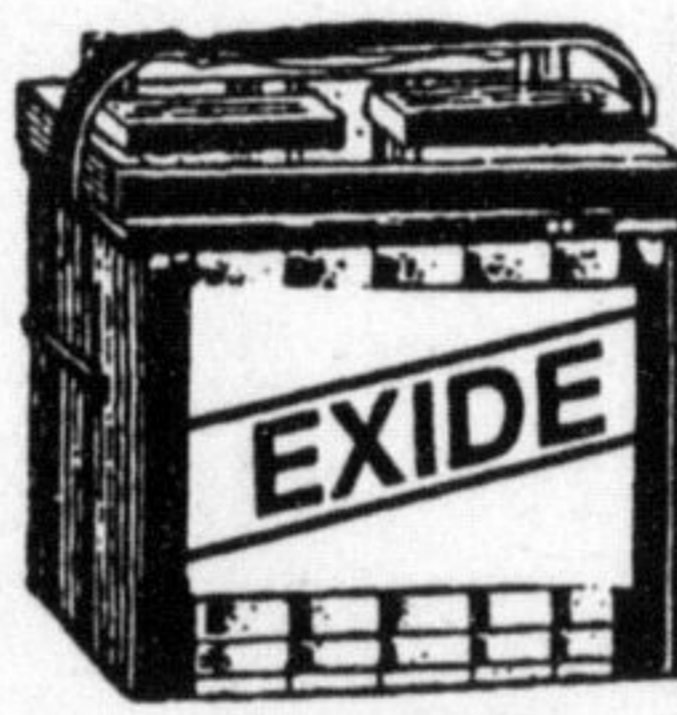
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Region endorses a strong provincial disabilities act

IRENE GENTLE

The Champion

When it comes to breaking down barriers for the disabled, it could be said the silence has been deafening.

Which is why members of Halton's deaf community appeared before the Region's health and social services committee Tuesday to ask that it endorse a strong Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA).

The act, which aims for work and leisure activities to be accessible to all, easily won the support of councillors around the table.

Final approval is expected at Wednesday's regional council meeting.

Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf grade 11 honour student Brenda Koumphol addressed the committee on her difficulties in finding a summer job earlier this year.

"I tried to explain, through writing and gestures, that there were a variety of things a deaf person could do," she said through an interpreter.

Though it took a while, Ms Koumphol was eventually hired to work in an office.

But she soon found she wasn't being promoted as high and fast as her hearing peers, said Ms Koumphol.

And Marilyn Hunter of the Milton Deaf Action Group spoke of waiting in pain in a hospital emergency room.

Despite having explained to staff that she'd need to be tapped when it was her turn to see a doctor, she sat for hours while others who came after her went in ahead.

After approaching staff to ask why she hadn't been seen, Ms Hunter was told her name had been called.

"They were embarrassed because they forgot to physically tap me to let me know it was my turn," said Ms Hunter.



"I think that inasmuch as some of us have been trying to change things, this act is a louder and more appropriate statement."

JOYCE SAVOLINE

Incidents like these need to be addressed, said Halton Chair Joyce Savoline.

"I think what this motion does is support something that has been silent for too long," she said. "I think that inasmuch as some of us have been trying to change things, this act is a louder and more appropriate statement."

Under the ODA, businesses and government agencies would be required to identify barriers within the organization, develop a plan to remove them, and then carry out that plan.

Further work is necessary to ensure all residents achieve their best, said Oakville Mayor Ann Mulvale.

"This sort of sensitization is extremely important," she said. "Potential comes in all shapes and sizes."

A staff report on the issue noted that 1.5 million Ontarians, or up to 17 per cent of the population, lives with a disability.

But Burlington Councillor Jack Dennison pointed out many of them are seniors, whose limitations are due to aging.

He endorsed the ODA, but stressed that many of the ill-effects of aging can be staved off through proper nutrition and exercise.

Donations trickling in

The Champion's Christmas Bureau Fund is now underway, and local residents are once again being counted on to make the annual fundraiser a success.

To date, \$1,520 has been collected for the campaign — which assures all local families have a nice Christmas, complete with dinner and toys for the children.

A lot more help is needed over the next

month if this year's goal of \$25,000 is to be reached.

Last year, \$22,000 was raised.

Please send donations payable to the Christmas Bureau Fund, Box 248, Milton, Ont., L9T 4N9, or drop them off at our office, 191 Main St. E.

Cash, food and toy donations are greatly appreciated.

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COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

SAM SHERRATT TRAIL- PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Tuesday, November 28, 2000

7:00pm - 9:00pm

Sam Sherratt - School Library

To provide your input regarding pathway reconstruction and widening - pathway lighting - increasing visibility - mulching & naturalization along the entire trail. **Phase 1** of the trail has been identified as the length from **Laurier Avenue to the parkette at Gowland Crescent and Beaver Court.**

We value your input!

Drawings will be available to view at Town Hall, November 28 - December 8, 2000. Questions or concerns should be forwarded to Roberta Sager, Parks Technologist, 878-7252 ext. 2168.