

Some town councillors wary of controversial golf course study

By IRENE GENTLE
The Champion

A Halton study aimed at preventing golf courses from swallowing up prime agricultural land was endorsed with reservation at a Town committee last week.

The Region's Helma Geerts gave the Town's administration and planning committee a heads-up on the study, which if turned into policy would restrict new golf courses to less than first-rate agricultural areas.

"It's intended to say really no sprawl in this area," said Ms Geerts. "We were concerned about the incremental loss of prime agricultural lands."

But some councillors wondered if in doing so, the Region would be limiting a landowner's right to sell their property for a good price.

"The irony of trying to define the location of golf courses also binds and in some ways reduces the flexibility of prime agricultural lands," said Councillor Brian Penman.

He said that could reduce the selling price for farmers ready to retire.

"Cashing in their piggy banks may be

challenged," he said.

Councillor Barry Lee also expressed reservations on the issue.

"This started out calmly and it appeared to make some sense but it's getting more and more complicated," he said. "We have to recognize we're tinkering with property rights."

He said the policy could backfire since it's set up to prevent golf courses on good farm land and not all forms of development.

"We have to be careful we don't wind up looking foolish at the end of this exercise," said Mr. Lee. "If we start implementing policies to discourage a golf course and end up with a large trucking industry determined by another level of government we're going to look foolish."

And Councillor John Challinor wondered if the study would be able to hold up when challenged.

Undoubtedly this kind of discussion will end up at the Ontario Municipal Board," he said. "Your discussion may not be defensible."

But Town Planning Director Mel Iovio said the Region isn't planning anything that isn't already covered off in Milton's Official Plan.

"What's being proposed is in complete conformity with our OP," he said.

Ms Geerts said the study doesn't propose to shut down all talk of golf courses, but simply to place them in more appropriate areas.

Currently, courses are encouraged to settle in less than ideal agricultural lands, but a provision to apply for a special amendment has allowed too many to slip through, said Ms Geerts.

If turned into policy, the Halton study would tighten up that loop hole, making it much tougher for golf courses to steal viable farm land.

"We believe wholeheartedly that golfing is an excellent form of fitness," said Ms Geerts. "That's why we're taking a golf course positive approach in the appropriate locations."

But Mayor Gord Krantz wanted to ensure the committee's reservations on the issue were officially noted.

"I'm suggesting just raising a flag. We've been talking about it for an hour now and a lot of us have some concerns," he said. "I'm looking for an escape hatch, I guess, if we have to find one later on."

He said his greatest concern was the property rights of current land owners.

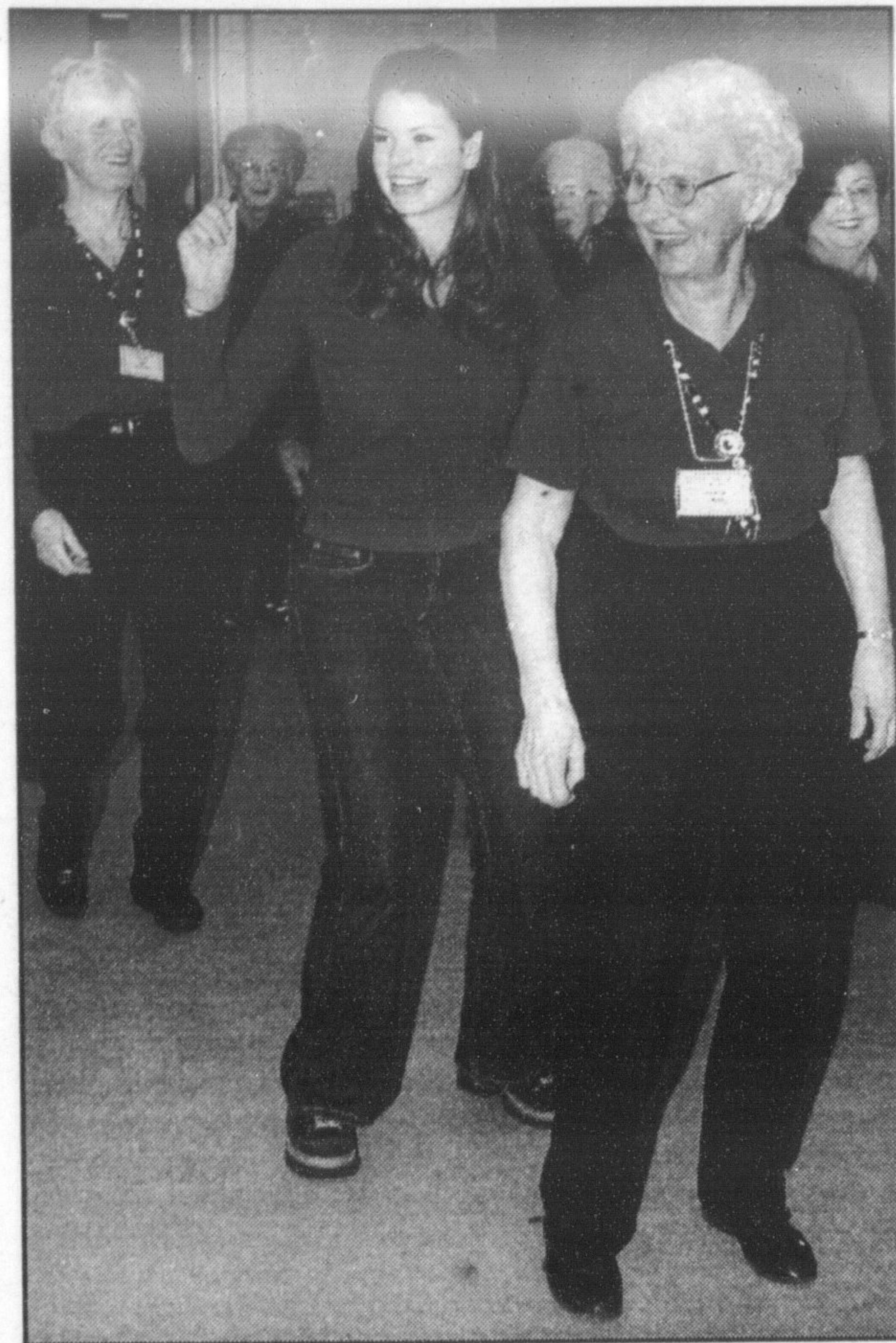


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Let's dance

E.C. Drury High School grade 11 students like Laura Mayes (centre) got in the groove January 18 at the Milton Seniors' Activity Centre's line dancing class. Showing her how it's done are Tina Opstein (left) and Doris Dales among others.

VON needs volunteers to visit clients

Interested in providing companionship to someone feeling lonely or isolated?

If so, the Victorian Order of Nurses wants to hear from you. VON is currently

in need of volunteers to make once-a-week visits with clients in Milton.

Also, the local chapter is hoping to find someone to work with a person living with

a life-threatening illness. Hospice training is available.

Anyone wishing to volunteer in either capacity is asked to call 827-8800.

Your First Payment IS ON US

GM will pay your first month on purchase financing or lease up to \$500

Low Finance...

1.9%

or

up to 60 months OAC



NO Interest For 90 Days

NO Payments For 90 Days

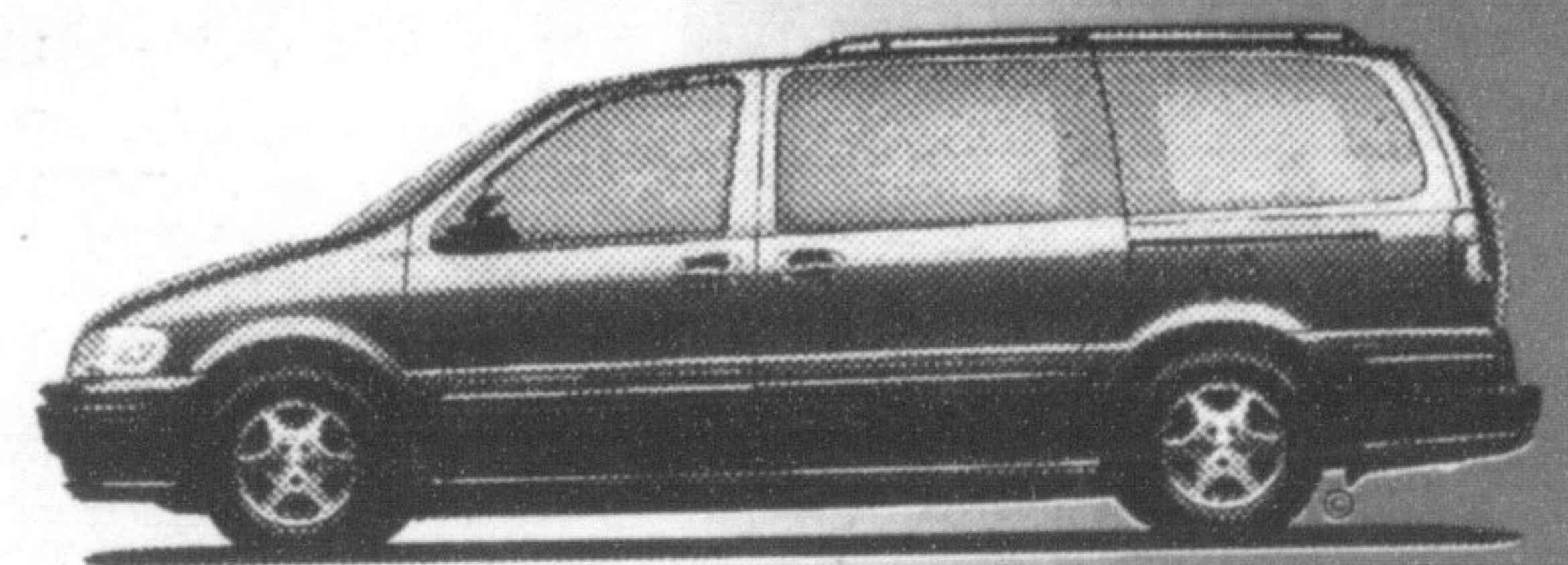
NO Money Down (OAC)



2001 Chevrolet Cavalier



2001 Chevrolet Venture Van



2001 Oldsmobile Silhouette

RICHARDSON

CHEVROLET-OLDSMOBILE 878-2393

HWY. 25 S. AT DERRY RD., MILTON

SALES HOURS	SERVICE HOURS
Mon.-Thurs. 8am-8pm	Mon.-Fri. 8am-5pm
Friday 8am-6pm	Tues. 8am-8pm
Saturday 9am-5pm	Saturday 9am-2pm