

Town argues Town Hall is most pressing project

By RICHARD VIVIAN
The Champion

Proposed locations for three Town of Milton facilities received little comment at a public meeting Tuesday, as discussions focused on construction timelines.

Following a series of population growth-related studies, the Town has identified the need for a larger Town Hall, a bigger public library and the creation of an arts and cultural centre — in that order.

But representatives from both the Milton Public Library and Arts Milton argued their projects deserved more immediate attention than suggested in the 14-year plan.

"We need about double the room so that we can have adequate storage room and expand our services — which will be needed with the increased population," said library head Leslie Fitch.

Arts Milton representative Bill Smelser similarly argued the need for an arts and cultural centre is pressing. Performing space is already

hard to find in Milton, and as the population jumps from 32,000 to 85,000 in the coming years, the demand will grow and space will be further reduced, he said.

"Milton is a growing community and we are concerned a number of our organizations don't have space to perform and they've started to go elsewhere to find space."

Milton's Director of Community Services Jennifer Reynolds told the crowd Town Hall is also at maximum capacity, and the studies indicate it to be the highest priority of the three projects.

Some people in attendance also expressed concern over the proposed locations for the three facilities. The three options presented at the meeting include:

- Expanding Town Hall at the existing site (43 Brown St.) and building the library and arts centre on the Milton Hydro/Lions Park site (corner of Thompson Road and Main Street).

- Developing the existing

Town Hall into the arts centre and putting the new Town Hall and library on the Milton Hydro/Lions Park site.

- Putting all three facilities at the Milton Hydro/Lions Park site.

Several speakers opposed having the three facilities at the Milton Hydro/Lions Park site, arguing there should be a civic presence in the downtown area.

"It would be a great way to support the downtown with an arts centre here (on the existing Town Hall property)," said Jeff Bergsma of Bergsma's Paint and Wallpaper. "It would bring business to the downtown businesses."

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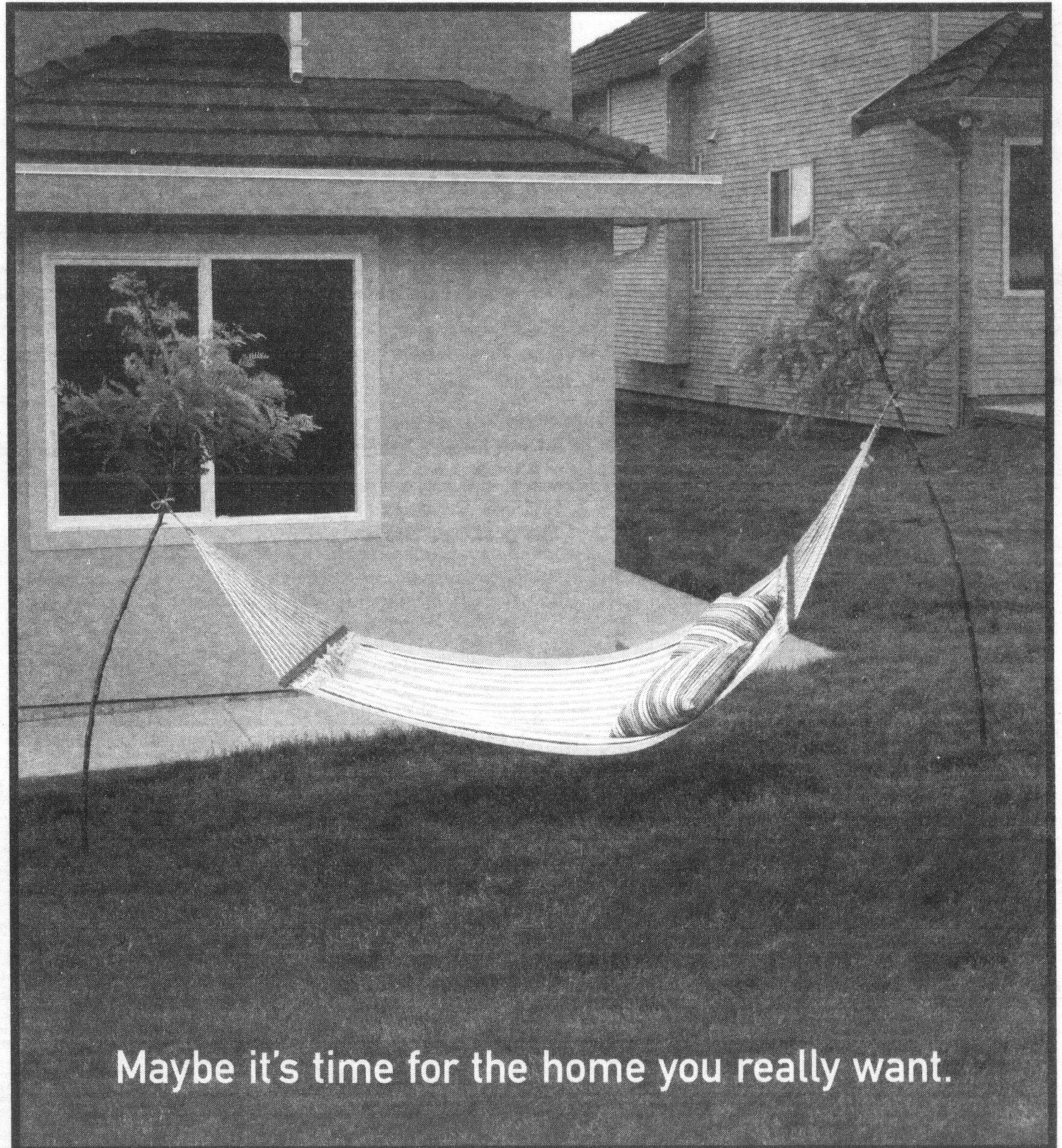
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