

Man wants Region to compensate him for problem water

By RICHARD VIVIAN
The Champion

On-going problems with "dirty" water have at least one area resident calling for a reduction in water rates and a partial refund — something Regional Chair Joyce Savoline says she wouldn't support due to the Region's work to resolve the issue.

Halton Hills resident Gerald Parker blasted members of the Halton planning and public works committee Monday, demanding the Region reimburse him for water he has received at both his home and business. The water has, on occasion, contained floating brown chunks of manganese from the Region's wells.

Health officials have repeatedly stated the levels of manganese don't present a health concern.

"Dirty water is contaminated, whether by perception or by reality," Mr. Parker told the committee when challenged on his definition of contaminated. "Clearly, the perception is — and the reality is by virtue of that — this it is contaminated. You try to get a child to drink it."

During times when the manganese levels are high, Mr. Parker said, he was advised by Region staff to run his water for about an hour until the manganese disappeared.

Residents are billed for the amount of water they use, leaving Mr. Parker and other residents to pay for the manganese-heavy water. That money should be reimbursed to the tune of \$105 per household,

the resident argued.

"Oakville and Burlington may have clean water, but us ugly cousins up here (north Halton) know differently," he told the committee, adding he's contacted the Ministry of the Environment for assistance in resolving the issue.

"It is the responsibility of the Region to provide clean water at the point of consumption."

Over the past several years, the Region has spent millions of dollars to address the manganese, including providing residents with bottled water, cleaning agents for stained clothes, installed in-home filters and swabbed water pipes, Ms Savoline said in response to Mr. Parker's demands.

"We were fighting Mother Nature. It was nothing that the Region did. It wasn't the equipment. It was simply a strain of manganese," explained Ms Savoline.

"The Region was very receptive, very communicative and very helpful throughout the community. We had absolutely no way of just stopping the problem until we found the right solution — which is where we're at now."

Earlier this year, a water filtration system was installed on wells feeding Georgetown to remove the manganese. A final resolution to the issue is expected this spring, when a filtration system is completed for the Milton wells, she added.

The committee didn't take any action on Mr. Parker's demands at the meeting.



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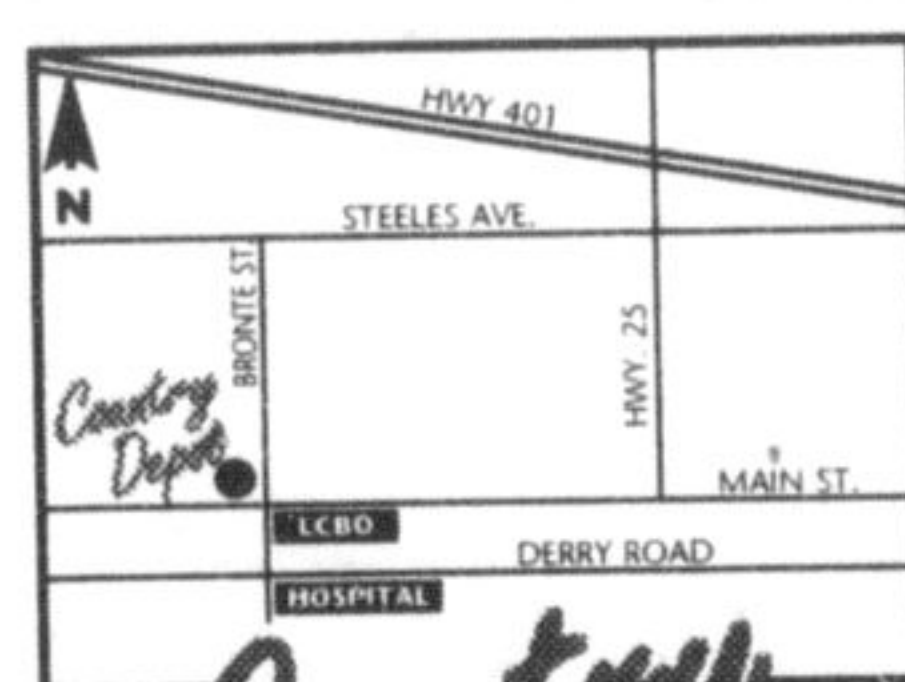
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