

Some residents not too crazy about track proposal

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"We believe these three additions (a hotel, golf course and convention space) will build this into a resort destination.

"We conducted a number of studies to ensure we could go forward with some confidence that we could meet the regulatory requirements of such a development."

It would be the first development of its kind in Canada combining horse wagering, slots, a hotel and a golf course, Mr. Careless said.

Under the expansion proposal the horsetrack and slots would operate the same way as they do now, he said.

A public meeting was held at town council to hear the plans. Council didn't vote on the project since there are other technical studies that must be done to properly assess Mohawk's application.

The application ultimately requires a vote from council to amend the Official Plan and a zoning change to permit the golf course and hotel.

Mohawk-hired consultant Peter Van Loan told council the increased amount of water used by the development wouldn't require a change to its water-taking permit with the Ministry of the Environment.

The two wells Mohawk draws water from are sufficient to handle the extra volume of water, he said.

Also, a treatment system is proposed to be built on the site to handle additional waste from the development. The effluent would be treated and disinfected and held in a reconstructed lagoon. Some of the effluent would be used for irrigating the golf course, while the rest would be discharged into a nearby stream that flows into the Sixteen Mile Creek.

Mohawk was chosen for a possible expansion, Mr. Careless said, because Woodbine is already well established with its seven million annual visitors who bet on horses and use the 1,700 available slot machines.

"As Mississauga and Milton build out, it makes sense for us to make these strategic decisions at this stage."

Mr. Careless said a technical report from Town staff could take between six and nine months to complete. Issues to be examined include environmental and agricultural impacts, traffic, servicing and market demand.

Because of the length of time the Town will need to evaluate the

proposal, Mr. Careless said it's premature to speculate when development could start.

"We'll take it step by step," he said. "I don't think I feel comfortable doing that (providing a start-up date) at this stage."

But nearly a dozen residents told councillors they're not totally comfortable with the proposal. They said the development would create traffic strife and waste problems and risk impacting well water, among a number of issues.

John Lawrynovicz, who lives near the racetrack, said he's worried about the use of pesticides to take care of the greens at the golf course.

"I'm concerned about the use of pesticides and what they're going to do to the basic watershed."

Phil Van Alstyne said the current traffic at Mohawk dissipates at around 2 or 3 a.m. and has helped lead to a drop in property value of his Guelph Line home.

"This doesn't sit well in a rural community," he said. "How many names are required on a petition to get council to vote

against this?"

Said Bill Searle: "I don't mean to sound derogatory, but I question if this would be entertained if the Town of Milton wasn't receiving six million dollars a year (in slots revenue)."

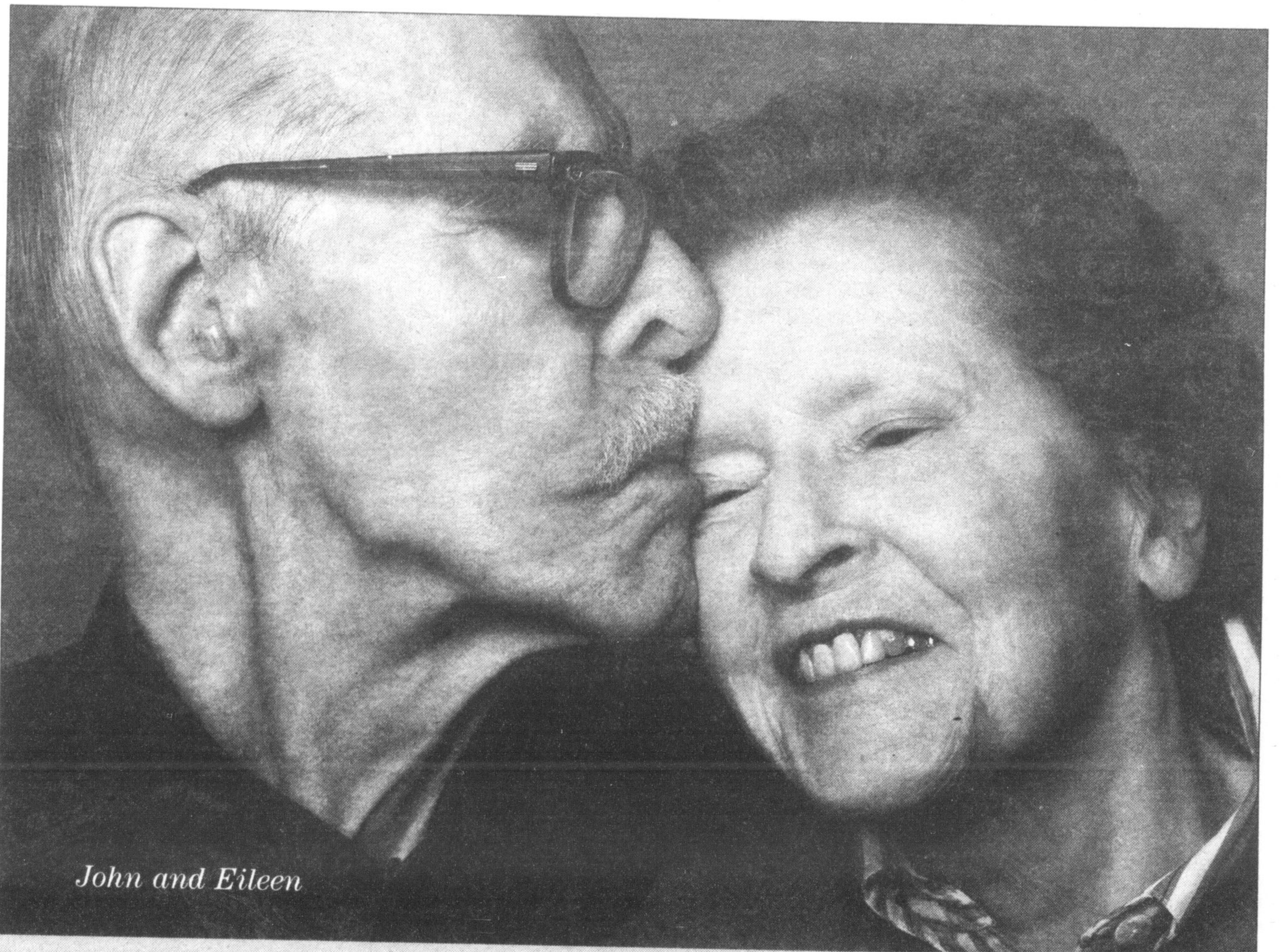
Mr. Careless said Woodbine would attempt to mitigate as best as possible residents' concerns.

"We are not irresponsible people. We draw water from those wells and we want to ensure the water is maintained properly," he said.

"We're going to be working with the Town of Milton and the different regulatory authorities to ensure there are no problems."

You can view the proposals by contacting the Town at (905) 878-7211, and you can send your comments about the development to planning staff by mail or e-mail at planning@town.milton.on.ca.

Jason Misner can be reached at jmisner@miltoncanadian-champion.com.



John and Eileen

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