

Town says legal opinion on bike path is in its favour

By **JASON MISNER**
The Champion

Residents are feeling pretty good about a legal opinion that shows the Town has the power to redesign or relocate a contentious paved bike path in the relatively-new Hawthorne Village subdivision.

"We feel, since there is some flexibility, that it allows residents and elected officials to come up with a possible fair and safe compromise that will be more suitable to the residents in the area," said Rob Deslauriers, who has been working on the issue on behalf of residents living on the four streets affected by the bike path.

He would like to see, for example, a path cre-

ated north of the subdivision where there's open land.

Paul Cripps, Milton's engineering director, said an opinion provided last month shows the Town "has more manoeuvring room than we thought we might have."

He wouldn't specify any further about the Town's position on what kind of bike path it would like to see.

A meeting will be held before Christmas between Town staff and the Hawthorne developer, Mattamy Homes, so they "can understand each other's position in regard to the matter to make sure everyone knows what options are available."

A public meeting with residents will be held probably in the second week of January to get their feedback on the bike path issue before a recommendation is brought before council for a vote, likely in February, said Mr. Cripps.

Any changes to the bike path require a council vote, he said.

The bike path has become a sensitive issue because Mattamy had plans to build a \$125,000 paved path that many residents vehemently opposed. It was proposed to run between boulevards — open pieces of land in front of homes — and would cross residents' driveways.

Homeowners have argued they knew nothing about a bike path, and when they did, they said

the type of path devalued their homes and was too unsafe because it would bisect driveways.

The complaints eventually prompted the Town to send a letter to Mattamy in mid-September instructing the company to halt impending construction of the bike path.

Residents have said they're not against bike paths, but want a path better designed compared to Mattamy's current one.

The Town has said the bike path is part of an agreement signed with Mattamy, which owns the three-year-old subdivision, before housing construction was allowed to start.

Jason Misner can be reached at jmisner@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

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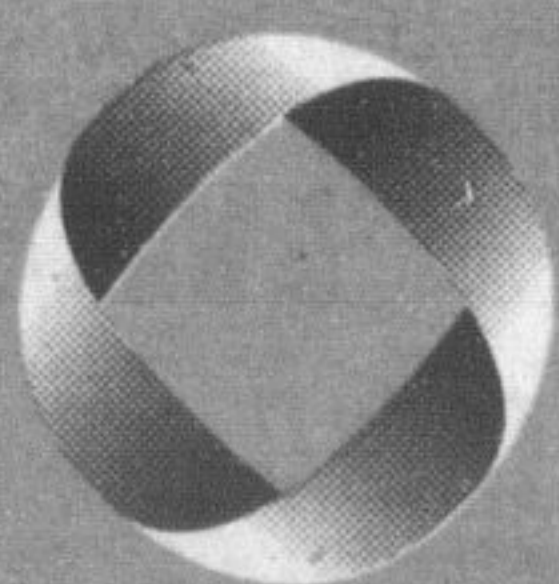
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