

# Carriage Square to clear bridge

By **JASON MISNER**  
*The Champion*

The stormy issue about a snowed-under bridge linking condominium tenants and the downtown core appears to have been smoothed over.

Residents had been complaining recently that the decades-old bridge that spans Sixteen Mile Creek, east of Martin Street, was loaded with snow and had become dangerous — or impossible for some — to cross. They demanded to know why the Town left it uncleared. The snow has since been removed by a Good Samaritan.

After receiving complaints, Paul Cripps, Milton's director of engineering, spoke to the owner of Carriage Square shopping plaza, whose property abuts the small bridge. Mr. Cripps said he was told the plaza had cleared the snow from the bridge for a number of years. A change in personnel this year saw the bridge get mistakenly forgotten.

Mr. Cripps said he was assured Carriage Square will assume snow-clearing duties next winter. In the meantime, the Town will look after snow-shoveling responsibilities of the bridge the rest of this nearly-completed winter season.

"I think it's great Carriage Square has taken initiative to look after something like that. It benefits their customers and the general public," Mr. Cripps said.

He added the Town will check next winter to see the bridge is being cleared.

"We'll keep an eye on it, for sure." Signs were posted at the bridge earlier this month informing residents the bridge isn't maintained in the winter. It wasn't clear what will become of the signs given the latest information.

Carol Snow, a superintendent of the condominium at 100 Millside Dr., is delighted to hear the bridge will be cleared regularly. She said many seniors use that bridge and it's vital that it's looked after by somebody.

"This should ease everybody's mind and will hopefully make people feel better. It makes access so much easier for the elderly people. I'm happy."

Ward 2 Councillor Mike Boughton, whose ward includes the core area, is comforted to hear the bridge will get attention. But he's not thrilled the snow-clearing duties of the bridge fell through the cracks. To ensure it doesn't happen again, he said he will talk to Town staff to see what could be done to have the bridge included in the Town's annually approved winter sidewalk/walkway clearing routes.

"What is one more added to it," he said.

Mr. Cripps said this is entirely up to council. "If council is concerned about making sure public walkways and public roadways are kept at adequate levels of service and maintenance, council's got to decide if they're satisfied with it being done by somebody else and not under Town forces."

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# School board budget process is expected to be delayed this year

By **TIM WHITNELL**  
*Special to The Champion*

The school board budget process in Halton and across Ontario might be slightly delayed this year due to fiscal constraints dogging the new Liberal government, indicated a local public school board official.

Carla Kisko, the superintendent of business services with the Halton District School Board, told trustees recently that information about the general legislative grants from the Ministry of Education will probably be released a little later than usual, meaning annual school board budget deliberations could begin a little later than normal.

The provincial education grants, called GLGs, are the many funding envelopes that all boards receive and use for various responsibilities like teacher compensation, classroom spending and special education.

Ms Kisko said the board typically reviews its school staffing needs in March and that GLG information usually arrives in March or April.

"We are hearing the grants may come in April or even May as the government wrestles with the \$5.6 billion deficit," said Ms Kisko.

At a recent board meeting, new Burlington Trustee Wes Pulling asked his colleagues to make a formal request to require board officials to walk trustees — four of whom are new — through the budget process at committee meetings in March and April.

He also wanted trustees to have budgets and financial statements for the last three years by this past Wednesday.

"I don't think this requires a motion. It is a very transparent process. I've sat on the audit committee," remarked Burlington Trustee Debbie Downs.

Education Director Dusty Papke agreed that a formal request for budget background and other financial details wasn't necessary.

**"We are hearing the grants may come in April or even May as the government wrestles with the \$5.6 billion deficit."**

**CARLA KISKO**

"We've had a budget process in place for the last few years. With or without a motion we are going to do that. We are going to take a lot of your time," he told trustees.

Ms Kisko proposed that three public budget sessions, the same as last year, be held around the region for residents to go to — even though historically they're not well attended.

### Lots of time for talk

She also said there will be plenty of opportunities for trustees to talk to her about the budget.

"I'm quite excited about boring you to death with budgets," Ms Kisko told trustees.

Halton Hills Trustee Ethel Gardiner sympathized with the concern of the new trustees.

"I understand the angst of new trustees surrounding budget because it's a horrendous thing to go through."

Mr. Pulling's request, supported by the three other new trustees and veteran Burlington Trustee Peggy Russell, lost by a 6-5 vote.

Ms Kisko noted the Halton public board is "tracking to a balanced budget position" for the current school year. The board's budget for 2003-04 is about \$310.5 million.

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