

# Council sends its taxi licence bylaw back to drawing board

By MELANIE HENNESSEY  
The Champion

The controversial new taxicab and limousine licencing bylaw put forward by Town staff has been sent back to the drawing board for tweaking.

After council heard much outcry from local taxi drivers and owners over the proposed phasing out of the taxi plate waiting list at last week's meeting, Ward 4 Councillor John Challinor brought forward a motion to defer the bylaw to staff for revisions.

The waiting list holds prospective taxi brokers in the order in which taxi plate applications are reviewed by the Town. Currently, one plate is permitted per 2,000 people.

The list, which has 49 names on it, would be phased out by approving 10 owner's plates per year until there are no more names left.

Mr. Challinor proposed the bylaw be revised to include a stipulation that 10 taxi plates be issued immediately.

Then, Town staff would meet

with representatives from the local taxi industry next year to review the remainder of the waiting list to determine the proper plate-to-population ratio for 2006 and beyond, taking into consideration taxi service quality, accessibility and the industry economic health.

"Today, we don't know how many names on that list are real," Mr. Challinor said. "We won't know until they're contacted."

Town Clerk Troy McHarg previously explained staff wants to get rid of the list to ensure fair market competition in Milton.

But, William Perras, the lawyer representing Milton taxi owners, disagreed with that statement.

"Just because you have more plates issued does not mean there will be another brokerage," he told council. "It's chaos that we're going to have 10 more (plates issued) for the next four years. The effect of abolishing the waiting list would be catastrophic."

Ward 2 Councillor Mark Curtis told Mr. Perras the words he used, like catastrophic and chaotic, have somewhat offended him.

"To make an informed decision, catastrophic doesn't do it for me. I don't know what you mean by that," he said. "Maybe it's because of the work I do (as a priest), catastrophic takes on another meaning."

Mr. Perras, along with several other local taxi drivers and owners, requested the Town slow down the plate issuing and defer the bylaw until further research can be done.

Mr. Challinor noted 99 per cent of the taxi issue revolves around the quality of service being provided in Milton.

"Our concern is that the residents in our community are properly served," he said.

At the end of the bylaw debate, Wards 2 and 4 Councillor Ron Furik voiced his happiness with the new document.

"I like the bylaw. I think it's what we need for this community," he said.

The revised bylaw will come back before council November 22.

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at [mhennessey@milton-canadianchampion.com](mailto:mhennessey@milton-canadianchampion.com).

# Arrest made in truck stop robbery

Police have laid charges in connection with the October 18 robbery at the Fifth Wheel Truck Stop gas station.

At 10:30 p.m., two suspects jumped over the counter and removed an undisclosed amount of money from

the cash register before running out the rear door. A third man remained outside in a waiting car.

A 21-year-old Milton man of no fixed address has been charged with two counts each of robbery and breach of probation, plus disguise with intent.

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