

Milton unique town, CAO tells Chamber

By MELANIE HENNESSEY

The Champion

The Niagara Escarpment, unique planning initiatives and low tax rates — these are just a few of the things Mario Belvedere says set Milton apart from other communities.

The Town CAO presented his 'Top 10 Reasons that Make Milton a Special Place' at the Milton Chamber of Commerce's annual Mayor's Breakfast held last week at the Ramada Inn.

"We have so many things in this community that are unusual, unique and special," he told the crowd.

He started off by listing the things he said don't set Milton apart, such as growth and traffic congestion.

"When you have a community growing as fast as we are, you're going to get that (congestion)," he said.

On the growth side, he said in every community that grows there are residents who aren't happy with it.

"You get the NIMBY (not in my backyard) syndrome," he said.

He noted the Province mandates a variety of housing styles, like apartments, but "the problem is nobody wants them in your backyard."

He then proceeded to detail his top 10 list, which kicked off with the Niagara Escarpment.

"We are extremely blessed and fortunate to have the Niagara Escarpment in our community," he said.

He pointed out the escarpment contains numerous conservation parks within Milton's borders.

"I am not aware of any other community that can boast this kind of feature in their community," he said.

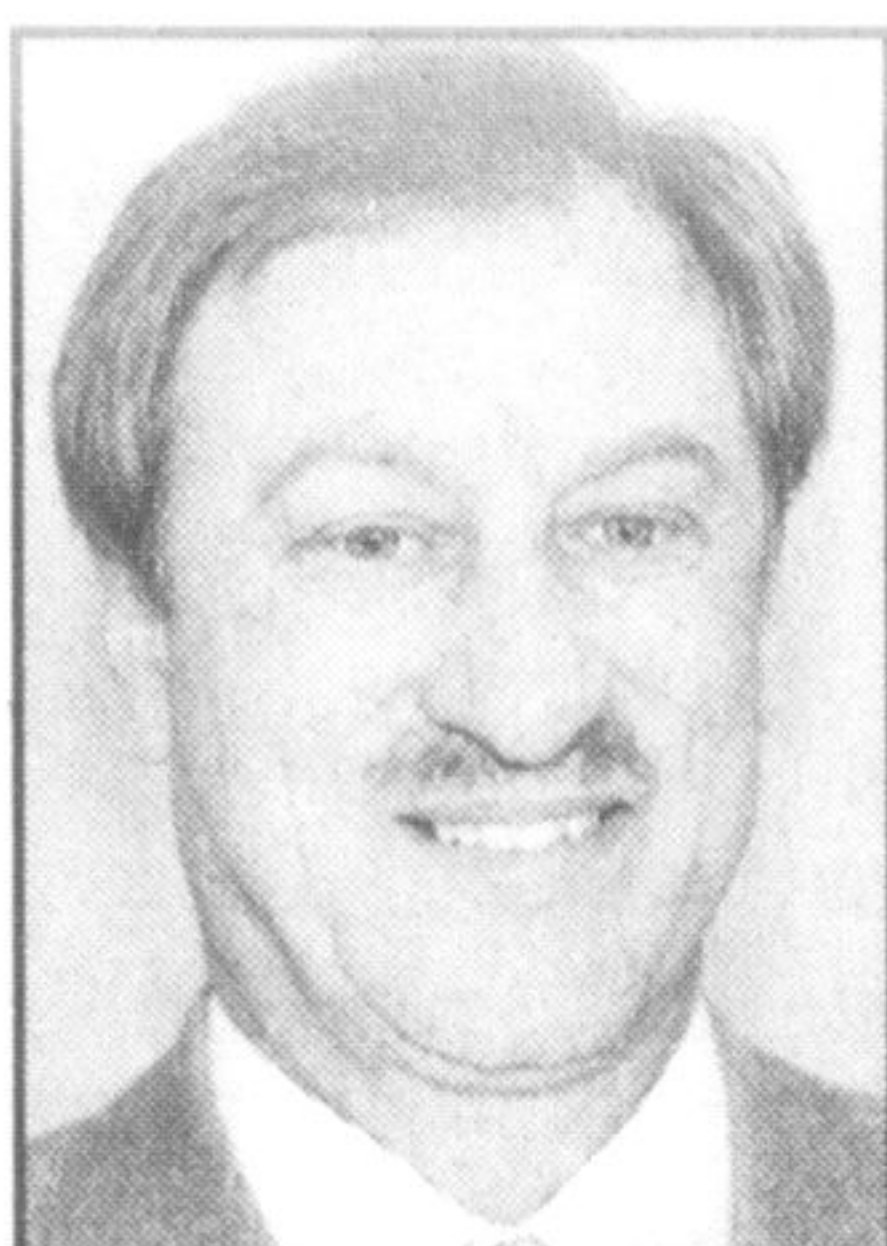
The strides the Town has made in land stewardship was next on his list. He noted the Town has negotiated the preservation of 12 woodlots in the newly-developing Bristol Survey Secondary Plan area.

Milton's trails system and natural corridors and parks and open space placed third and fourth in the top 10, followed by bal-

anced industrial/commercial development.

"It's a myth that all we're getting in this community is residential development," he said, noting last year the Town attracted 1.6 million square feet of new development in this sector.

The revenue the Town gets from Slots at



Mario Belvedere

Mohawk to the tune of \$5 million to \$6 million a year is also something Mr. Belvedere said sets Milton apart, along with the unique financial agreement it's made with developers.

He said developers in the Bristol Survey Secondary Plan area have to pay a premium per lot of \$1,702 in phase 1A and \$1,861 in phase 1B — money that helps finance things like the proposed Town Hall expansion and library renovations.

The top 10 list rounded out with the Town's unique planning initiatives, community partnerships and low tax rates.

On the planning initiative front, he high-

lighted the Town's "tremendous commitment" to the downtown, which has involved a \$1.8 million streetscape project and \$4.3 million undertaking to extend Main Street out to James Snow Parkway.

"Now, we have a very healthy and vibrant downtown," he said.

He highlighted the approximate \$615 the average Miltonian has to pay in taxes this year, pointing out that even if Milton's taxes went up by 13 per cent it'd still be lowest taxed municipality in the GTA.

Melanie Hennessey can be reached at mhennessey@miltoncanadianchampion.com.

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