

Comment

The Canadian Champion

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An unlikely source

A proposal was put forth last month that would see trucks prevented from travelling faster than 105 km/h on Ontario roadways.

What was most surprising about the proposal was that it came from the Ontario Trucking Association (OTA).

OTA president David Bradley said his members are concerned about increased speeds on the 400-series highways and poor lane discipline by some truckers.

Bradley, who added the move would save fuel and reduce emissions, said truckers shouldn't be put under pressure to break the law in order to meet their time schedules.

While we believe the average motorist would welcome such a plan, independent truckers argue that the differential in speeding is dangerous — not speeding itself.

Going slower is only safe if everyone goes slower, said Joanne Ritchie, executive director of the Owner-Operators' Business Association of Canada, which

represents about 40,000 independent truckers.

It seems strange to us that Ritchie would oppose something that appears to be little more than a safety measure aimed at preventing the loss of lives of all who travel our terribly-congested roadways.

Under the proposal, any truck in Ontario or entering Ontario would have to engage the engine governor, which is already built into engines less than 10 years old. The governor would prevent the truck from exceeding 105 km/h.

The fact remains many trucking firms already use the governor and we fail to see how getting multi-ton vehicles to keep closer to the speed limit is a bad thing.

Yes, there are bad truckers who are a danger on the road, but they don't make up the majority of bad drivers. This proposal would help keep those bad truckers in check.

Our Readers Write

Councillor's comments unacceptable

Dear editor:

During a Town of Milton Administration and Planning Committee meeting January 23, I gave a brief presentation as to how I as a Milton citizen felt the Town wasn't fulfilling its 'Guiding Principles for Public Consultation' mandate in regard to a seven-storey hotel and gas bar being proposed for the east end of town.

My thinking was grounded on the fact that after a sign regarding a zoning amendment application was erected on this proposed site, two public meetings were held which, according to the Town's own records, no citizens attended.

My conclusion drawn for this no-public showing was that the public was not really well aware that there was something fairly huge being

thought of for this particular area of town and thus, effective public consultation didn't really happen because few people were actually aware of the matter.

After my presentation, Councillor John Challinor, who I believe was a tad bit disturbed with my submission, challenged my conclusion and later suggested as a means to keep me otherwise occupied that I might wish to apply for one of the Town's crossing guard employment opportunities that he had just heard about from a previous presentation.

I have a lot of respect for what our crossing guards accomplish, for they truly assist many in our community to better bridge some difficult road crossings.

On the other hand, Mr. Challinor's comments didn't really

help much of anything, let alone the Town's quest to achieve better two-way public consultation with all citizens of Milton.

I don't believe I'm the first to make this statement, nor will I be the last.

Though a crossing guard's function is extremely important to our community, I need to remain a people's activist, always looking to improve on how all our citizens are involved with the Town's decision-making processes.

I believe it's important to ensure we always have effective public consultation in all our Town's growth initiatives by assisting with democracy.

Bob Beyette
Campbellville

New Town Hall plans result of dedicated residents

Kudos to Miltonians. A group of citizens who kept on top of the Town Hall expansion situation and strongly voiced their dislike for one of the architect's plans have brought forth a new design much more fitting for the town's core.

With what I believe will be a beautiful new expansion — the design was passed by town council Monday, as reported elsewhere in this paper — the actions of a group of dedicated citizens will benefit us all. Because like it or not, our Town Hall is a reflection of us.

For those of you who haven't been following the expansion closely, the situation started when it was announced Town Hall was to receive an expansion to the tune of \$19 million.

The architect contracted to do the job, The Ventin Group, churned out a design that residents didn't like. So, at an open house in November,

they protested.

And then, at a meeting January 18, a new design was revealed that incorporated many of the ideas residents had given.

It was an excellent example of democracy at work.

As someone who owns a house not far from Town Hall, I too crinkled my nose when I saw the initial plans for the expansion. Too modern. Those words were echoed again and again by residents, and summed up my feelings exactly. I've come to love the current Town Hall, complete with its "secret garden" (my term for the courtyard garden cultivated by the Milton and District Horticultural Society), and didn't want a concrete monstrosity to overshadow it.

The new expansion, with its graceful arches, complementary stone facade and enhanced land-



Around town

with STEPHANIE THIESSEN

scaping, just seems to fit among the graceful century homes of the area.

But a debate is still raging among a small number of residents who still don't think highly of the expansion. In fact, some think it's not needed, and that the Town's various departments can be housed in buildings scattered across Milton.

Some think the scope of the project is just too huge.

I encourage the continued debate, because that's what public consultation is all about. And more than once, the outspokenness of a few residents has caused me to look at a situation differently. But not this time. We have to keep the bigger picture in mind. Councillor Wendy Schau's comment that this isn't some "rinky dink" town is right on. If we want to attract the right kind of development and the jobs it'll bring, we need to project a unified, progressive image of the town.

The balance between old and new, stagnation versus development is a delicate one indeed. But I think the new Town Hall has the potential of being a true success story showing that a town can embrace its past while still being a competitive force for the future.