

Public consultation process only as good as the people involved

DEAR EDITOR:

On February 28, 2005, Milton council passed a resolution to adopt the Guiding Principles for Public Consultation, indicating that the "Town supports the open flow of information between government and the community in order to assist in the decision making process on issues that affect the public."

As a member of the public and a board member of the Milton Rural Residents Association, I appreciated the fact that council agreed to set out these guidelines. An amendment to the original motion to accept the guidelines resulted in the addition of clarity and transparency to the issues covered and directed that the public consultation principles be brought back to committee in approximately one year's time for review and further refinement. This amended motion was passed by a 7 to 4 vote.

The guidelines as a whole have resulted in improved communication between the Town and the public. The Town Web site is now a much more valuable tool for finding out about issues, agendas and minutes from committee and council. Town staff is to be commended for this improvement.

Notices for public meetings and delegation requests have become more open and, in most cases, lead-time has been more

adequate. The ability to request delegate status up until the morning of the meeting allows time to investigate the issues before deciding the necessity or importance of speaking before council or committee.

Input has been solicited from the public and efforts need to be made to ensure that this input is valued and respected.

With some issues like the Brookville Park expansion, public input is being asked for five months before the project is scheduled to begin. However other issues like the 2006 budget only allowed the public three days to try and understand the budget before it was quickly passed by council.

There seems to be concern about notification of tower construction and development applications that are now catching the public, and in some cases councillors, off guard.

The public consultation process is only as good as the people involved. The public has a responsibility to be informed and to make their feelings known. This could be to commend a decision, seek clarification or debate an issue. The Town has a more difficult task in that it needs to be recognized as being supportive of public input.

Often this input comes from only a few members of the public and this shouldn't diminish the importance of what they

have to say. I hope that council appreciates that these people are motivated by genuine interest in the town of Milton, the community that we share and the environment that surrounds us.

The Guiding Principles for Public Consultation serve as a check for us all and aim to make sure that our directions are encouraging the best possible results for Miltonians. I trust that council will accept the public's comments and will share its review of the guidelines with the people of Milton. In this way we can all see the process of working together.

We challenge the members of town council to look beyond the basics required by policy and legislation. More residents were concerned about the planned development at James Snow Parkway and the tower at Ontario Street and Derry Road. Even councillors requested staff give them better notice of issues such as the towers.

Together we can provide the best possible input on decisions that will and do affect all of the residents of Milton. We encourage interested members of the public to attend the Community Services Committee meeting this coming Monday to hear and be involved as this issue is presented by Town staff.

**JIM HARDING, SECRETARY
MILTON RURAL RESIDENTS
ASSOCIATION**

LHINs not likely to improve health-care system

DEAR EDITOR:

In your discussion of Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) in the February 17 Champion, you mentioned possible cost savings through the restructuring of health-care delivery.

The last bout of restructuring in the 1990s was characterized, I believe, by a series of arbitrary moves and amalgamations. With a decade of reflection, I think honest people will admit these moves served none of us well — as I predicted at the time.

To face another such upheaval is disconcerting, since the last attempt caused a lot of people a lot of pain for little or no gain.

To add insult to injury, hospital maintenance workers, who perform the essential tasks of keeping our patients fed, warm and in clean surroundings, are facing increasing insecurity about their jobs.

One has to wonder who's responsible for threatening front-line workers while cowering behind the vague promise of cost-savings that are unlikely to arrive.

Will this improve your chances to achieve timely access to the excellent health care that you and your family deserve? I sincerely doubt it.

**DR. GARNET MALEY, PRESIDENT
HALTON MEDICAL SOCIETY**

Condition of Milton roads heavily criticized at meeting

'Time Capsules' are gems of information extracted from past issues of *The Champion* and other publications in order to provide a window into Milton's past. Explanatory comment is sometimes provided to place the situation in context.

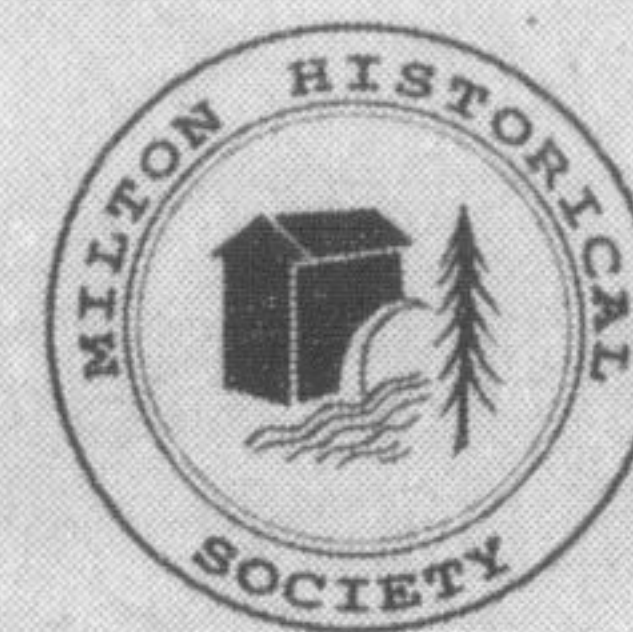
May 1907

A Good Roads meeting at Milton was addressed by Mr. Campbell. While admitting the good work done by the statute labor system in the early days in Ontario he said it was completely out of date now that time and money expended under it was simply wasted inasmuch as the results were nil. The roads were not improved and never would be until a better system would be adopted. In order to participate in the Government appropriation for road improvement all that would be necessary would be the adoption of a county roads system. This having been done the Government did not require any expenditure on roads but would pay to the county adopting such a system one third of whatever amount would be expended. Reeve Higginbotham of Milton distributed among those at the meeting maps of the county printed at his expense in which the designated county roads were marked in red lines. They were greatly appreciated.

Jailer Vanallen attended the funeral of the late Johnson Harrison on 20th of April, but did not go from the Methodist Church, where the service was held, to the cemetery. He caught cold or grippe and two days ago pneumonia developed. His many friends will be sorry to hear that this morning his physician gives no hope for his recovery as his heart has become extremely weak.

All lots now sold in Evergreen Cemetery will be sold with a condition that the Company will take Perpetual Care of the same. The Directors have on hand \$500, which will be placed in a "Perpetual Care Fund." Half the proceeds of all new sales will go into this fund. All who own lots at present can come under

Milton
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Capsules



this system by paying 50 percent of the original cost of their lots, which will go into the fund. This will be a great benefit to lot owners and will be the means of inducing many from surrounding country to purchase lots in Evergreen Cemetery.

At 11.45 on Tuesday evening a fire broke out among the old foundry buildings on Commercial St. owned by John Stewart. It began in the one next the creek which was unoccupied and which had been used for years as a paint shop. The latter fact may account for the rapidity with which it burned. It was a mass of flames before it was noticed. The fire brigade lost no time about getting to work but before they could get their hose coupled the fire had extended to another of the Stewart buildings occupied by the Halton Cream and Butter Co. also to their ice-house and to that of Fred Wales. These were all burned but a good deal of the butter making plant and butter which had been prepared ready for shipment was saved. By the good work of the fire brigade the main building of the old foundry was saved but the engine house was practically destroyed although the engine which stood in it and which was used until last year by the Milton Electric Light and Power Co. and its belting were little, if any, damaged. The hose from the carpet factory was throwing water on the flames for some time before the larger hose was laid and did extra good work. Men were busy yesterday at the two icehouses. The outer ice was badly honey-combed but that inside was undamaged. It was covered as quickly as possible and there will be no ice famine in Milton.

This material is assembled on behalf of the Milton Historical Society by Jim Dills, who can be reached at jdills@idirect.com.

If you received a blood transfusion or blood product before 1992, you may have been infected with hepatitis C.

Hepatitis C is a blood-borne virus that slowly damages your liver. Symptoms do not show up for years but you will eventually get sick. Before 1992, screening for this disease was not consistent and many patients became infected through the blood system. So ask your doctor about getting tested. Detection is key to controlling the virus and you may be entitled to financial assistance.

1-877-222-4977

www.health.gov.on.ca/hepc

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Find out if you have it.
Get tested.

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