

Town hires more staff to process building permits

By Melanie Hennessey
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

In response to Milton's development boom, the Town is bringing new staff on board to help process building permits in a more timely fashion.

At its meeting Tuesday night, Milton council approved creating four additional staff positions — two engineering technologists, a zoning officer and plans examiner — that'll come into effect July 1.

A report from Director of Corporate Services and Treasurer Linda Leeds explains the extra staff is needed to process building permits because the Town currently isn't meeting the time-frame requirements set out by the Province.

"Furthermore, it is anticipated that the volume of permit requests in 2006 will exceed that of previous years," the report notes.

Council also endorsed recruiting an economic development officer on a contract basis for two years, also effective July 1, to ensure growth in economic development continues.

CAO Mario Belvedere pointed out that the staff additions will have no impact on local residents' taxes, since they'll be funded by fees charged to the development community.

Ward 4 Councillor Wendy Schau said she strongly supports the request for extra employees.

"It sounds like the staff are very badly needed," she said, noting she hopes next time there won't be such a serious circumstance — referring to the lag in issuing building permits — before something's done.

But, Mayor Gord Krantz wasn't as convinced that the extra staff is necessary. He questioned what would happen two to three years down the road if the building boom ceases, noting he thinks at that point the new employees would create an impact on the property tax base.

The two engineering technologist positions, which will each cost \$33,125 for the remainder of 2006, will be paid for by engineering and inspection fees. In 2007, it's estimated the positions will require \$66,550 each.

The zoning officer and plans examiner wages will be funded by building permit fees and will require \$29,176 and \$32,330 respectively this year and \$58,351 and \$64,660 respectively next year.

And funds for the economic development officer contract — \$28,114 for 2006 and \$56,228 for 2007 — will come from cost savings in the economic development department.

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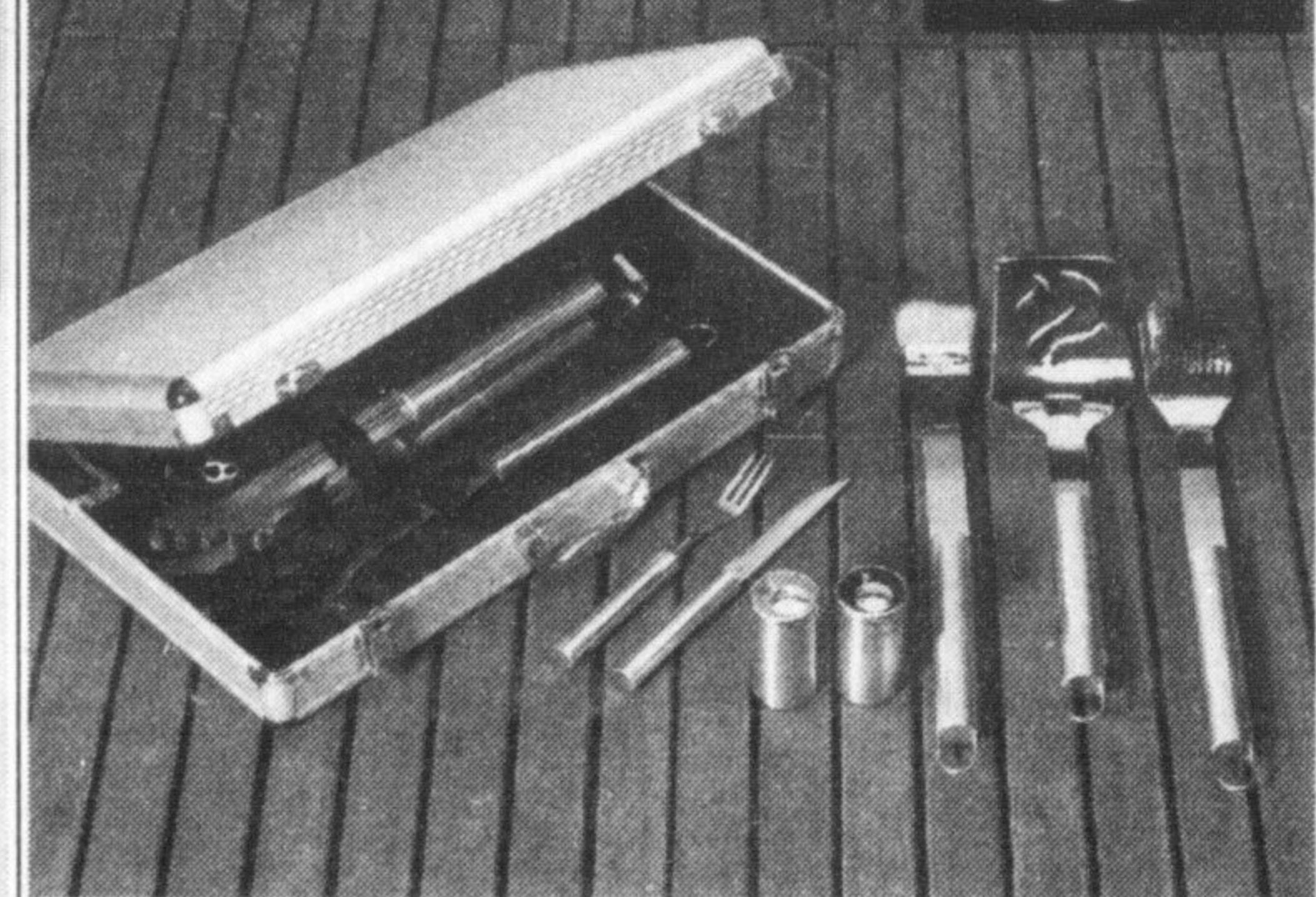
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