

# Road dust drives distraught residents to town hall

By **ROB KELLY**  
*The Champion*

When it comes to their road, First Line residents feel they are caught without some rocks or a hard place.

Approximately 25 of those rural residents, who live on First Line between Steeles Avenue and Five Sideroad, basically southwest of Campbellville, showed up at town council's general committee meeting Monday night to protest the state of the road in their neighbourhood. They complained about potholes and dust clouds so thick the grit coats their patios and outdoor furniture.

They wanted the road paved, but that's not likely to happen, since it would cost approximately \$1.1 million to do the job right, according to Milton public works director John Matthews. Instead, after a discussion with the residents that lasted about an hour, councillors asked Mr. Matthews to prepare a report on possible short-term solutions to the problems.

Later Mr. Matthews said just about all he could offer this year would be more grading of the gravel road and possibly more frequent applications of dust-suppressing chemicals.

The residents had, it appeared, presumed that the Town could coat the loose gravel road with asphalt or at least tar and chip surfacing for relatively little money. The bumping and grinding car ride on First Line was the primary concern of group spokesperson Ruth Coates.

"I consider this a serious problem," she told councillors. "Something has to be done about it." She said she has watched the area school bus "shimmy" around a curve in the road. "If the school bus does that, what does it do to a smaller car?"

Various residents then rose to support her. One man said he has asthma and two children similarly afflicted, so the dust represents a genuine health hazard to his family. Another said he had to hose down his patio furniture to wash away the dust regularly. Yet a third said he now keeps his windows shut all summer because of the blowing grit.

Mr. Matthews explained that the provincial government has banned the use of motor oil as a dust suppressant on rural roads. Municipalities across Ontario are still searching for a substitute chemical as cheap and effective, he added. Current concoctions tend to be brittle and break up when potholes start to form on gravel roads. They lose their effectiveness when that happens, he said.

As far as resurfacing the road goes, that presents numerous finan-

cial difficulties, Mr. Matthews warned. Even if the \$1.1 million asphalt option is discarded, a tar and chip surfacing would run to an estimated \$450,000 for the 3.2 kilometre stretch.

The entire road bed needs rebuilding, the public works director said,

and numerous pieces of adjoining property would have to be purchased from private landowners for the right of way needed to widen the road to the current standard.

For a major capital project such as the \$450,000 or \$1.1 million options, provincial grants might be

available, Mr. Matthews said, but not in 1992. In the mean time, if the Town chose to pour more gravel into the road bed to strengthen it, that would cost roughly \$18,000 per kilometre, and the Province does not fund such ventures, he added.

Mayor Gord Krantz warned that

the only way money could be found to do anything major on First Line, given ongoing budget restraints, would be by cutting back on other road projects. Those affected by such cutbacks would probably also organize a protest before municipal politicians, he warned.

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In need of a home, Duke is waiting to be adopted from the Oakville Humane Society, 445 Maple Ave. Call 845-1551.

The shelter is looking for donations of large blankets for its vans.