

WCB agrees to reconsider jump in fees for cleaners

By SAL BOMMARITO
The Champion

The owner of a Milton company slapped with an increase of more than 300 per cent for Workers' Com-

pensation Board (WCB) premiums says she's relieved the board has finally agreed to reconsider its decision.

In June the WCB notified RT Graham Maintenance, a low-rise

window cleaning business which employees three people, of its decision to classify the firm in the same category as high-rise window cleaning.

As a result, the company's WCB payment swelled to \$2,072 annually, up from \$572.80.

Company owner Lois Graham said at the time she would be forced to lay off her son, 22-year-old Darren, because of the increase. Ms Graham, along with co-owner husband Robert, vowed to fight the increase.

They also explored the possibility of making Darren a partner in the firm, as a short-term solution, to avoid paying workers' compensation.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business and Halton North MPP Noel Duignan wrote to the WCB on the company's behalf. Even Mike Harris, leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, got into the act by addressing the matter in the provincial legislature.

This week, a WCB spokesperson said the classification of all low-rise window cleaning companies was being reviewed.

"There has to be something done," said Sam Stanois, a technical adviser in the WCB's review branch. "It's not appropriate to put low-rise window cleaning companies into the high-rise classification. My feeling is something positive will come from this review."

Ms Graham sounded relieved after hearing of the WCB's move on Wednesday.

"It sounds like we accomplished

what we set out to do," Ms Graham said. "It's because the pressure was being put on from all sides. If I hadn't fought it, I would have had to pay the higher rates."

Ms Graham said she hopes the decision will also help other companies which specialize in cleaning ground-level windows of malls.

"It's not just a small service only a few would require. All the malls have to have their windows cleaned," she said.

"You've given my husband a good birthday present," Ms Graham said. "He'll be happy to hear that news."

Town probes rural businesses over zoning

By SAL BOMMARITO
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The Town of Milton says three rural businesses must apply for zoning amendments because they don't conform with the area's agricultural designation.

"We haven't indicated the businesses should cease. We've indicated the businesses are incompatible with the zoning in the area," John DeVries, the town's building and enforcement director, said.

He said the town will be inviting the business owners "to come in and discuss remedies with the zoning officer."

Mr. DeVries said the town began investigating the businesses — two of which are located on Eighth Line, the other on Lower Base Line — after the town's bylaw enforcement department received a complaint from a nearby resident.

The owners of two of the businesses, however, said they've been operating without incident for years.

"We're legally zoned here," said John Course, owner of Cedarlane Laboratories, located on Eighth Line.

"No one's come to us and said 'are you legally zoned here?'"

Mr. Course maintains the laboratory, which works with

animals used for research, conforms to land use rules. He said the business has been at the same location for the last 15 years.

Mr. Course said he suspects the root of the problem is a dispute between the town and another Eighth Line property owner, Eugene Cummins, who the town alleges is operating an illegal disposal site for construction waste on his farm.

Mr. DeVries confirmed the town received the complaint about the other properties while investigating

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