

Town considering \$6-million urban forest project

By Rachael Williams
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

The Town of Milton is considering a \$6-million project to protect and stimulate the growth of trees.

On Monday, the Community Services Standing Committee heard a presentation by Urban Forestry Innovations Inc., a consulting firm, centered on the town's need to sustain its urban forest. The 10-year plan called for increased awareness of the importance of trees, a risk assessment strategy and more dedicated resources, both human and financial. "Milton is very aware of the land use change from rural to urban and a strategic plan is needed to help manage it," said Philip van Wassenauer, principal consulting arborist and founder of Urban Forestry Innovations Inc.

According to van Wassenauer, the need for action is pressing. Milton is Canada's fastest-growing municipality and is transitioning from rural to urban at an alarming rate. Milton's population is expected to grow to 161,750, up 200 per cent from the current population of 95,879, according to the report. This will increase the need for housing and infrastructure and threaten the viability of the town's green spaces.

These pressures, combined with other threats such as pests, diseases, climate change and competition for resources will require long-term planning, said van Wassenauer.

The benefits of trees to urban residents include cleaning the air, improving stream water quality, mitigating climate change through carbon storage, reducing energy use, providing habitat for wildlife, reducing exposure to heat, increasing property values and reducing car accidents.

Mayor Gord Krantz was supportive of the presentation and asked van Wassenauer how to engage residents, who ultimately control 80 to 85 per cent of the urban forest.

Van Wassenauer said the Town must lead by example by maintaining the 18,729 Town-owned trees and stress the benefits of tree maturation to residents.

The strategy, envisioned back in 2011, wasn't without critics. Ward 4 Councillor Rick Malboeuf held the 113-page document in his hand, asking how many trees had to be chopped down to produce the 30 copies handed out to council and

Town staffers.

"Was it really necessary to go through these extremes and incur the costs (\$48,000 for consulting) to produce this report? We've managed our forests for years when we've had a lot more forests and trees than we do now," he said. Local and Regional Councillor Co-

lin Best questioned how to marry the ideas of planting new trees while ensuring they're not the source of destruction when natural disasters occur, like the August 4 flooding in Burlington.

Van Wassenauer noted the difficulty of getting people to act now in order to save time and energy later.

He used the example of two golf courses he worked with, one that properly-pruned trees throughout the year and one that didn't. When the winter ice storm hit in December 2013, the former incurred no damage while the latter was out \$100,000.

The \$6 million estimated cost over

10 years includes a management strategy to protect ash trees, increase administrative staffing, maintenance costs, risk assessments and management of the Town-owned tree inventory.

The report was received and will be reviewed for future budget consideration.

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BOTH LOCATIONS JUST MINUTES WEST OF BURLINGTON

Volunteers sought for Pink Ribbon Days

The Canadian Cancer Society is looking for volunteers to help paint Halton Region pink this fall with its annual Pink Ribbon Days.

From October 2 to 4, Pink Ribbon Days will see Canadian Cancer Society volunteers collect donations and distribute pink ribbons throughout the community to raise funds and awareness for breast health.

Dubbed Pink Ribbon Ambassadors, the volunteers are needed for two-hour shifts at various retail stores in Halton to collect donations and hand out ribbons.

Site co-ordinators are also needed to assist at various retail stores in Halton by picking up and dropping off pink ribbons and supplies for volunteers. Shifts take place on the following days and times: Thursday, Oct. 2, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Friday Oct. 3, and Saturday, Oct. 4, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For information on locations or to sign up, go to <http://1y59jkk.mycss-schedule.ca/events/index> or contact Sandy at smcdonald@ontario.cancer.ca or call (905) 845-5231, ext. 3163.

CFUW Milton and District to award special scholarship

CFUW Milton and District, a member of the Canadian Federation of University Women, is pleased to announce that as part of the national organization's 100th anniversary celebrations a special scholarship award will be given.

The award will be named the CFUW 100th Anniversary Gwen Dryden Margaret Gray Award. It will be presented to a female graduate from the Milton area who's pursuing post-secondary education. The criteria hasn't yet been set but is expected to be similar to those detailed on the current application forms.

Margaret Gray and Gwen Dryden both had very

successful careers teaching in Milton, according to CFUW locals.

Gray, who was a founding member of CFUW Milton and District, is well remembered by her fellow teachers and students at Milton District High School for her lively humour and dedication especially to her French classes. She has served many years on the local club's executive and has always lent a hand especially at the annual community book sales and market booth. Dryden is also a long-time member of the club. As a teacher of English in Milton, Dryden has always kept the members on their toes grammati-

cally. She's fondly remembered by her students and fellow staff members. Dryden is a past president of the Milton club, held various other executive positions and has served on the national board as a regional director. She's a past recipient of a local ATHENA award.

The Scholarship Award Committee has established a minimum amount of \$5,000 for this award but will accept outside donations to increase its value. All donations will be eligible for a charitable receipt as the trust is a registered charity. To add to the award's value, email cfuw-milton@hotmail.com or call (905) 878-7339.