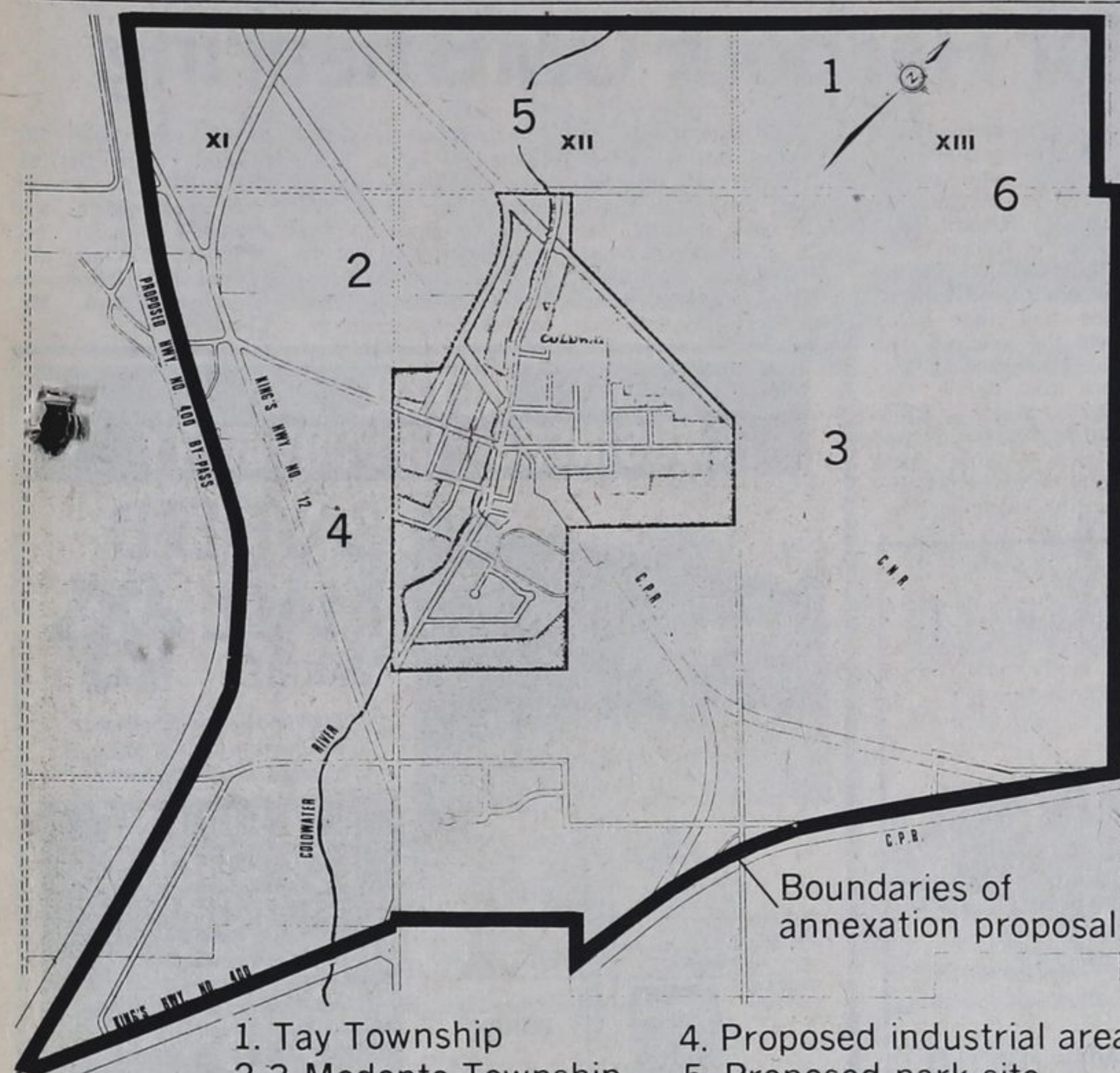


Three municipalities' stands on annexation proposal

Coldwater: we need more land to survive



1. Tay Township
2. Medonte Township
3. County Rd. 23
4. Proposed industrial area
5. Proposed park site
6. County Rd. 23

by Dagmar Kanzler
For Coldwater, annexation is simply a matter of survival.

It's becoming impossible economically for a tiny village such as is Coldwater to survive without increasing its assessment base. There's hardly any vacant land within present Coldwater boundaries, none of it suitable for much needed industry.

"Planning is necessary because the government says so - but it's becoming more and more costly. We need more hydro customers to help meet increased costs of maintenance - and so on," explains Coldwater Reeve Earl Brandon.

But more important to the adamant reeve is the matter of the Medonte Secondary plan first drawn up in 1976 but not yet accepted by the Ministry of Housing. Extensive residential, commercial and industrial development is planned for the north eastern border of Medonte Township, fronting directly onto Coldwater's southern boundaries.

"With that," says the reeve gesturing emphatically at the plan, "we'd be swallowed up in no time at all!"

It's because the reeve and his council want future growth in the area to be within the boundaries of Coldwater and not at the expense of the municipality that they're proposing annexation of 500 acres of Tay and 1,400 acres of Medonte Township, thus effectively enlarging its territory from the present 347 acres to 2,200 acres. That land, says Brandon, will be necessary to accommodate the 3,000 population he foresees for the area in the next quarter century.

Although Coldwater itself was not designated a growth area in the much talked about Simcoe Georgian Task Force report, substantial growth is anticipated in the surrounding area. Brandon is determined to see that Coldwater be at

the centre of that growth, that it is the one directing growth. "If we annex this land, we will be able to properly serve that population and maintain our autonomy," he has said.

Also to be considered is the substantial tax revenue likely to flow Coldwater's way if industries such as Athron Marine, Taman Industries and the Rolling Hills Restaurant, to name but a few and homes along County Rd. 23 are

absorbed into the town. The industries lie on a provincial highway and access route - their upkeep is the responsibility of the province. And the county road is maintained by Simcoe County's roads department. All of which means Coldwater will pay out little for upwards of \$15,000 in extra tax revenues.

Industries will come
The Industries instrumental for growth are

not there now, but they'll come says the reeve. His expansion plans have already received the tacit approval of officials from the Ministry of Industry and Tourism; Taman Industries, a manufacturer of stainless steel fixtures and Coldwater's major employer is presently just outside Coldwater boundaries in Medonte but has expressed an interest to expand on neighbouring land.

The industries which are now located in Medonte support Coldwater's annexation bid simply because they figure they'll save money in the process. Hard services are now their responsibility (neither Tay nor Medonte supply water or sewage services), and cost them plenty. Once hooked into the Coldwater systems, the savings might be substantial.

Then there's the

question of soft services - the facilities such as doctors, post office, service stations, recreation facilities - all now used by the approximately 225 people who live on the fringes of Coldwater.

Coldwater is their town, says Brandon, they use the arena, fair grounds, but the village doesn't get a cent of tax from these residents. For example, Coldwater residents rent 15 per cent of available arena time. The rest goes to outside groups, but Medonte pays only \$200 annually to the village, says Brandon, and Tay contributes nothing.

A few of the fringe residents are now without fire protection since Medonte cancelled its fire protection agreement with Coldwater two weeks ago. Although they're a stones throw from Coldwater and often a half hour drive from Medonte firehall, the village cannot provide fire services because its insurance simply won't cover firemen on duty outside town limits. The village, says the reeve, is caught in the middle. All Brandon says he can hope for is that there is no disaster just outside town limits.

According to Brandon, a poll of border residents indicates 50 per cent favour Coldwater's annexation proposal. Medonte, using the same logic, claims 50 per cent of its residents in the proposed annexed area are against annexation.

Brandon, among others has suggested that Medonte's opposition to absorption by Coldwater dates back to a half century old bitterness between the two municipalities. Medonte residents never quite forgave those who pulled out of the township 1908 to form an independent village of Coldwater. That move radically changed the future assessment base of Medonte township

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Medonte objects to losing commercial, industrial revenues

Although no written documents have been received by Medonte Township, it is the understanding of the township councillors that the Ontario Municipal Board hearing set for September 12 dealing with Coldwater's proposed annexation of approximately 1,700 acres of Medonte land has been postponed indefinitely at the request of the township.

According to the reeve Ingram Amos, the township ratepayers are objecting to being annexed by the village of Coldwater. "In my election campaign, I stated that I would follow the wishes of the

ratepayers," Amos commented. "If they wanted annexation, then I would work to give it to them," he said, "but if the people of Medonte were against the proposed annexation by Coldwater, then I said I would respect their wishes," added Amos.

The Medonte council, according to the Reeve, also feel Coldwater would be taking away some of the townships tax dollars, since the property Coldwater wants includes commercial establishments already flourishing in the township. Those commercial outlets include, Athron Marine, Taman Industries, a Golf course, Rolling Hills

Restaurant, and Glen Dunlop's plumbing business.

Medonte without planners To complicate matters even more for Medonte, they are presently without a consulting firm. This predicament came about when the township solicitor, Wilfrid Trivett, suggested the township release their present consultants, Winland Associates Engineering Limited, in Orillia.

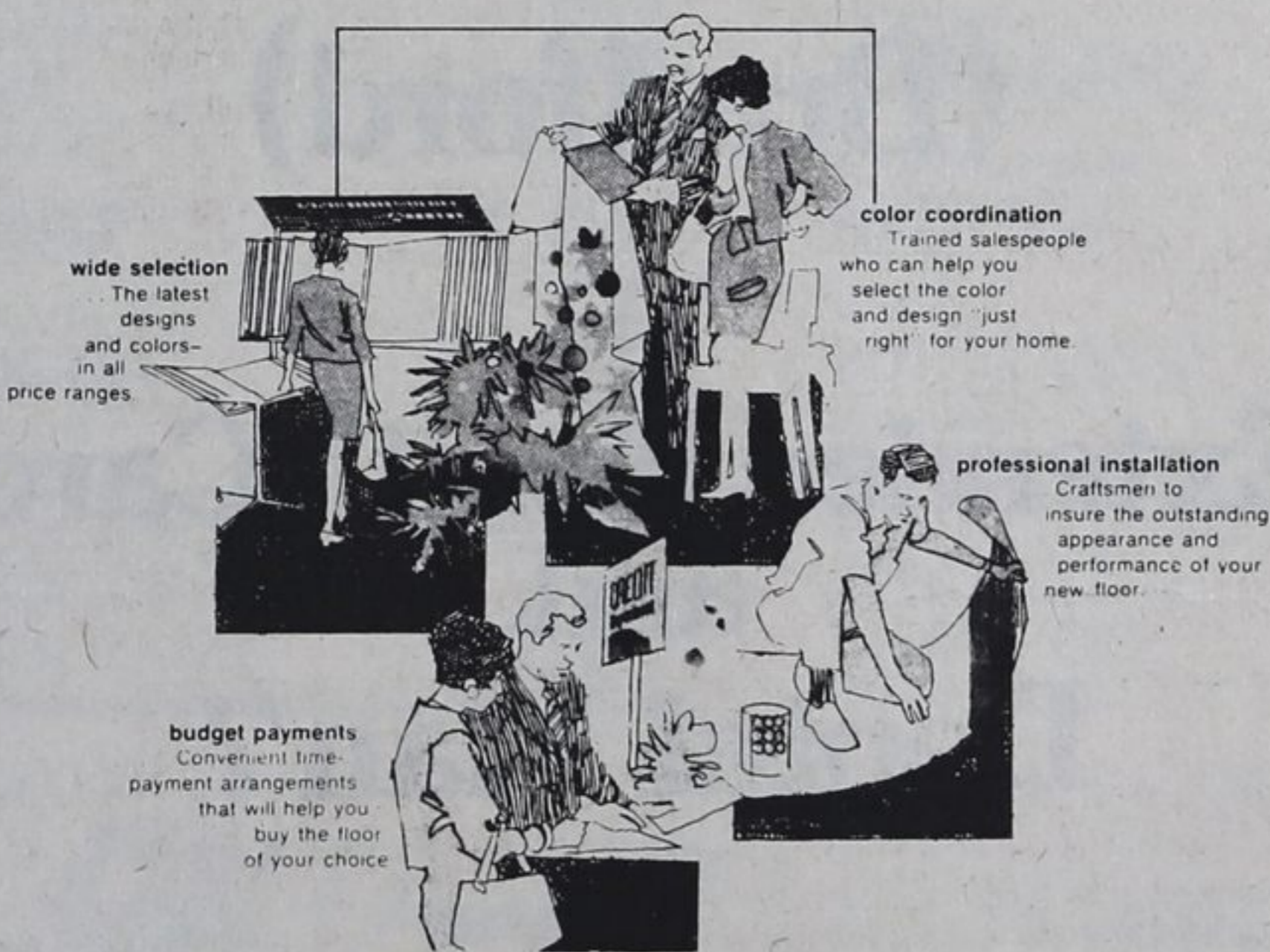
Reeve Amos stated that Medonte council followed the advice of council and did in fact release the consulting firm. He explained that the township solicitor felt Winland may not be acting in best interests for

Medonte, since Trivett believed the consulting firm was also representing the village of Coldwater.

Medonte council is presently looking for a new consulting firm, and will meet with several bidders at their next council meeting.

The postponement of the O.M.B. hearing on annexation will give Medonte time to hire a new consulting firm and will allow the new firm more time to assess the problems of annexation. The delay will also give Medonte ratepayers and council more time to further discuss the proposed Coldwater annexation.

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