

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

George Cox's insights will be missed

The August 2 edition of the Essex Free Press marked a milestone of sorts; the final regular column of "Sharing My Thoughts" by George E. Cox. I will miss his insights and I am sure many readers share my sentiments. Beginning with a column in which he shared his grief, George has articulately shared his memories, his beliefs and his wit. Whether conveying his experiences of Africa, his childhood or his current experiences, his columns were a joy to read and, quite often, an inspiration. Thanks George, for a job well done.

Dan Bissonnette

some younger go get something at Timmy's for a quick break or just to stop and have a fast coffee and chat after you go get groceries. Then why are they taking away the thing that we have? It's bad enough that we have lost a lot of things in Essex, now why do we have to lose this too? I don't want to have to go other places for good coffee when I know I can but it's always convenient for me to go to Timmy's and I know a lot of older people cannot walk too far to get a coffee and don't have a car. So wake up, Keith. Keep the Timmy's here in the Essex plaza.

Cecile Duchesne
Essex

Closing of Tim Hortons

We are told to sustain our local economy and support our local merchants. Well how are we going to do that if we're an older person without a car and want to go get a good cup of coffee or an ice cap and we have to walk all the way to Maidstone Avenue or by Canadian Tire to get it?

Things are always changing, sometimes for the good, some for the bad. The loss of Tim Hortons near Zehrs will be missed by many, especially the walkers! However, we will find another place to go for coffee in town. More business for the other stores and I guess that's good!

Your letter was well said Vicki Bennett.

Marg Kerr, Essex

Council supports term options for county wardens

BY SARAH FISHER

Essex County councillors voted Aug. 9 to endorse an attempt by the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus to reduce the term of office to one or two years for county wardens.

When the term for municipal councillors was increased to four years with the passing of Ontario Bill 81 on May 10, the term of county warden also increased to four years. Many wardens

have full-time jobs aside from their duties on their municipal councils and county councils. The wardens' caucus would like wardens to have the option of serving shorter terms, including one and two years.

Tom Bain, the deputy mayor for Lakeshore, told county council he felt one-year terms would undermine the authority of the warden.

"You're a forgotten entity," Bain said to Essex County Warden Mike

Raymond. "I think we've gained a lot from what we've done and I'm going to be voting against the motion. I think you've acquired a lot of credibility for this council."

"The fact of the matter is we're talking only about the option" Raymond said.

The warden's caucus plans to present the argument for shorter terms during committee hearings on amendments to the Municipal Act.

Essex Council notes

911 assistance

Essex Town Council voted Aug. 8 to talk with Phillip Berthiaume, Essex County's emergency management coordinator, before making a decision about a request by the 911 Ontario Advisory Board for money.

Information from the board states it is in urgent need of "operational support" and is hoping each of the 445 municipalities in the province will donate at least \$100. The letter stated that "technology advancements and the expansion of the telecommunications market have increased the work of the 911 Advisory Board."

"I make a motion that we don't file this," Deputy

Mayor Percy Dufour said. "The issue is they had one-time funding and it's run out and if we want 911 it sounds like we might consider this."

"This is a provincial problem," Councillor Randy Voakes said.

"So was the Family Health Centre and we supported that," Caixeiro responded.

Dufour changed his motion and suggested the council ask Berthiaume his opinion on the request before a decision is made.

Speed limit decrease

Ward 2 Councillor Richard Meloche asked council Aug. 8 to consider implementing a "community

safety zone" on County Road 11 south of the 11th Concession.

Meloche said he's spoken with residents in the hamlet of McGregor who complain that motorists are often driving 80 kilometres per hour in the 50 kilometers per hour zone near their homes. If council were to determine the area was a "community safety zone" speeding fines would be doubled, Meloche said.

Firefighter wage increase

The pay for Essex's volunteer firefighters will increase this year. Town councillors voted Aug. 8 to implement a retroactive pay increase that will be in place until November 2009.

By-law 753 lists the yearly retainer for captains as \$1,200. Firefighters will be paid \$650 yearly and auxiliary personnel can expect a \$300 retainer. The per-call fee is now \$37 and reimbursement for meetings is \$35 for captains and firefighters and \$21 for auxiliary staff. Overtime pay is \$16 for all three categories.

Next year the retainer for firefighters increases to \$700, the per-call rate jumps to \$39 for captains, firefighters and auxiliary members, and there will be a \$1 increase for meeting reimbursement fees for all three categories of personnel.

In 2008 and 2009 the retainer stays the same, but small increases in the other rates will take effect.

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NOTICE OF OPEN HOUSE SESSIONS TOWN OF ESSEX PROPOSED NEW OFFICIAL PLAN

TAKE NOTICE that the Corporation of the Town of Essex will hold the following open house sessions to provide interested stakeholders with an opportunity to review the most recent draft of the new Official Plan for the Town of Essex:

- Monday, September 11th, 2006 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.**
Harrow and Colchester South Community Centre, 243 McAfee Street, Harrow
- Tuesday, September 12th, 2006 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.**
Essex Municipal Building, 33 Talbot Street South, Essex

The Town of Essex Official Plan is a document that provides a policy framework for decision-making to guide growth and development within the Town until the year 2021. The Plan designates all land within the municipality under general land use designations such as residential, industrial, commercial, natural heritage or agricultural. It also contains policies related to the development, conservation and use of these lands and identifies the services necessary to support such designated uses.

As a result of amalgamation, the Town of Essex inherited four separate Official Plans in those of the former Town of Essex, the former Town of Harrow, the former Township of Colchester North and the former Township of Colchester South. These documents are approximately 20 years old. The new Official Plan consolidates these into one document covering the entirety of the new Town and updates policies to make them consistent with the new Provincial Policy Statement and the County of Essex Official Plan.

Some of the more significant policy initiatives of the new Official Plan include:

- Directing growth to fully serviced settlement areas
- Strengthening the policies related to the protection of agricultural lands and natural resources
- The establishment of an Agri-Tourism designation and related policies to encourage winery development and other agri-tourism type uses south of County Road 50, east of the Colchester Hamlet
- The introduction of policies related to wind farms
- The introduction of Community Improvement Policies that enable the Town to provide incentives to development and/or upgrading of unique areas within the Town

ANY PERSON may attend the open house sessions. Copies of the draft plan and related background reports will be available for review at these sessions. Any questions pertaining to the new Official Plan may be directed to the Town Planner, Chad Jeffery, at 519-776-7336 ext. 14.