

Stouffville Tribune

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OPINION

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Rick Vanderlinde

Future of dump still matter of debate for politicians, voters

As political manoeuvres go, it was pure poetry. The Liberals, somewhat desperate to be seen as the party responsible for permanently closing the Keele Valley Landfill, had painted the Tories into a corner.

Grit leader Dalton McGuinty challenged the Conservatives Wednesday to support his private member's bill calling for the Maple dump to be closed at the end of this year — no excuses, no loopholes.

The strategy was nearly flawless: If the Mike Harris government supported the bill, the Liberals and their byelection candidate Greg Sorbara would look like champions.

If the Tories voted down the bill, as they did, the Liberals could say Harris and his candidate, Joyce Frustaglio, aren't serious about closing Canada's biggest landfill.

The Liberal strategists got what they wanted when a front-page headline shouted, 'Tories vote down bill to close dump by 2002.'

The Tories scrambled to put their spin on the Liberal tactic, calling McGuinty's bill a desperate move that would absolve the City of Toronto from cleaning up its operation when the dump closes.

Whether or not the Ministry of Environment would ever let that happen is beside the point. What the Tories have failed to address — and it was the point of the Liberal bill — is why they refuse to close a loophole created by the NDP in 1992 that allows the dump to be expanded in an emergency.

Frustaglio, Harris and Environment Minister Elizabeth Witmer have all but guaranteed the dump won't accept any more trash by the end of 2002.

Yet they haven't come clean about why they won't close that loophole.

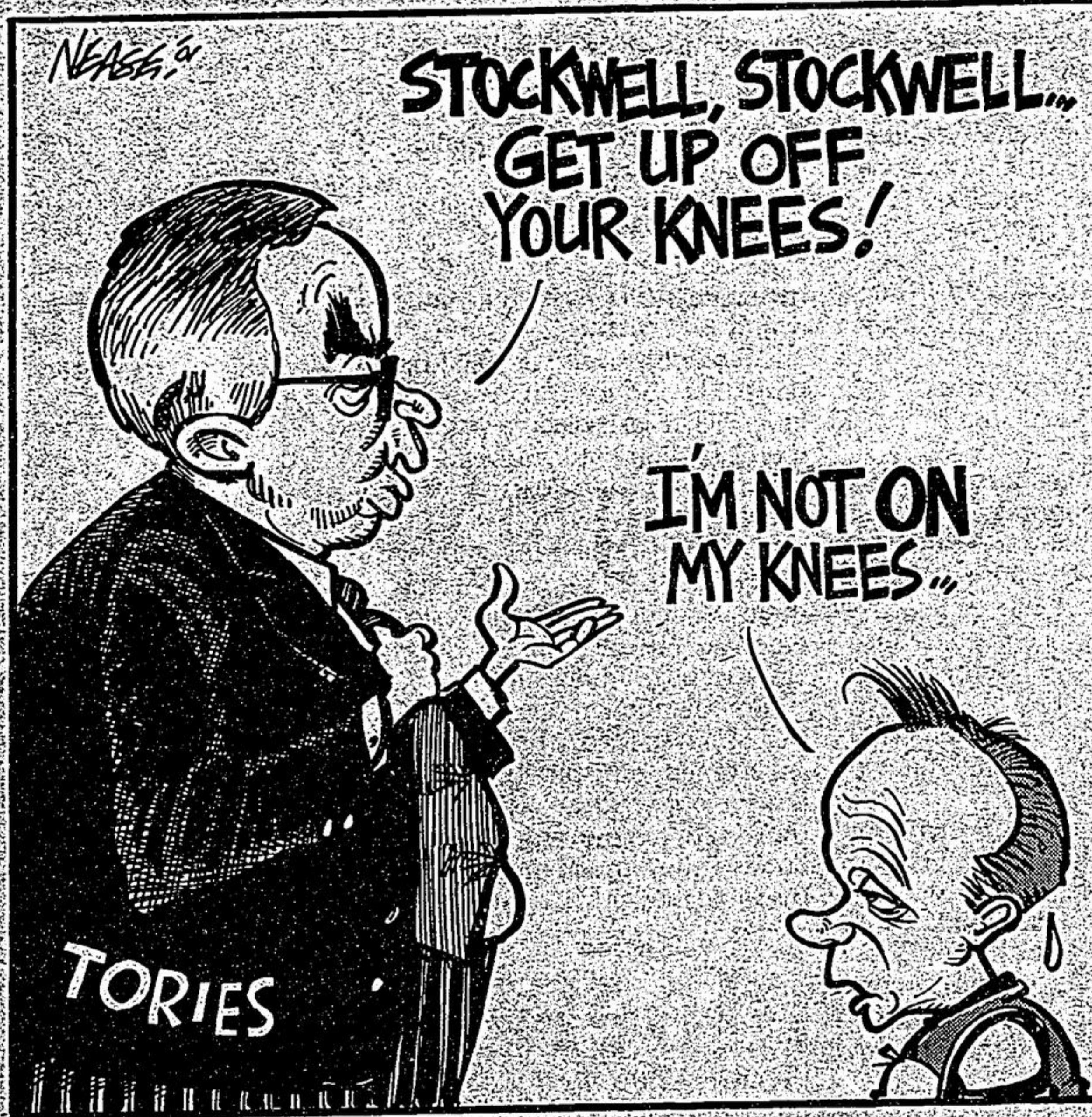
Harris offered a hint Thursday, saying the dump will close in 2002 but Toronto and York Region need time to find alternatives for their trash.

So what if those alternatives — so far, shipping garbage to the States or an open mine in Kirkland Lake — don't materialize quickly enough? That's when the Tories beg forgiveness of the people of Vaughan and keep the dump open until another site is found. And who can blame them?

It may not be politically advantageous to admit it in the middle of a byelection, but preserving that option makes sense. After all, what's worse, keeping a state-of-the-art dump open a little longer or watching garbage pile up in the streets?

No matter where you stand, this garbage crisis is a political conundrum for everyone involved, including the voters.

What a mess.



LETTERS

School board should not tolerate anti-Semitic materials

Re: *Race committee under fire over Holocaust material, June 16.*

Kathleen Griffin's article leaves me shaking my head. How is it possible that the York Region District School Board can stand by and allow one of its committees to tolerate the distribution of anti-Semitic materials by one of its own members?

Would the board stand idly by if this happened in one of its schools?

Would education director Bill Hogarth step back and put his hands in his pockets if a principal told him that "the teachers voted on the material and we decided it was OK"?

How can we expect the board to create a proper environment in the schools when it can't do so in its own offices?

TANIA NUSSBAUM
THORNHILL

Cornell Ratepayers Association has worked hard for residents

Re: *Cornell housing project in turmoil, June 5.*

There are distinct and different definitions for the words defensive and empathetic. They are not synonyms. In his recent articles about Cornell, Mike Adler does a disservice to your paper by confusing these two words.

While I may be called empathetic to the developer in Cornell, I do not believe I can be called defensive.

The Cornell Ratepayers Association and this president take as our primary objective to build a community which, by definition, is far more than bricks and mortar.

Thus, we have many dedicated volunteers working hard at programs that enhance the social atmosphere.

We have had many successes and take pride in the community that we are starting to create here.

Naturally, all ratepayers have demands of the developer, the builders and the town. Our role is to be a channel of communication and to be as rigorous as the situation demands.

We have had many direct — and sometimes severe — confrontations with Larry

Law. Our representations to the town have been made with the same attitude and the same level of expectation.

We now have in place a town-vetted and approved project completion schedule, which all of our ratepayers can monitor. This is a direct result of our efforts and intercessions with both the developer and the town.

GARY ATKINS
PRESIDENT
CORNELL RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION

Despite politicians, environment planet's most important issue

Allow me to put in my two cents with regard to the provincial byelection in Vaughan-King-Aurora.

On the Liberal side, you have a multi-millionaire developer. As a cynic, I can only believe he sees trees as but an obstacle for the bulldozer.

On the PC side, you have a Vaughan councillor, a high-growth proponent who I must hold partly responsible for transforming a beautiful community into a perpetual purgatory of rush hour traffic.

Forget the NDP. Socialism doesn't work. The Oak Ridges Moraine and the more than 200,000 people who rely on it for drinking water should have been protected by provincial decree long ago.

That would also put a natural limit to our unsightly urban sprawl and allow clean air to flow in from the north into our smoggy cities.

Quite simply, the environment is easily the most important issue on the planet today.

LETTERS POLICY

Stouffville Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The newspaper reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

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