

Election sign removal frustrates provincial candidates

BY MIKE ADLER
Staff Writer

Locally, it's been the first big battle of Election 2003: Liberal and Tory candidates versus York Region's sign bylaw.

"We have been picking up a lot of signs," regional roads director Brian Harrison said Tuesday. He said the bylaw ought to be clear enough to campaigners. "A lot of them seem to know about it but disregard it," he said.

The region controls York's major roads and prohibits election signs along

them unless they are at intersections. "If they're (positioned) mid-block, we'll take those down," Mr. Harrison said.

MARKED INTERSECTIONS

But the region has also marked some intersections — such as Woodbine Avenue at Hwy. 7 and 16th Avenue at Hwy. 48 — as "restricted," making signs on those corners illegal.

Towns have sign bylaws of their own. Campaigners for both parties say they wish the region and the towns had done a better job

of spelling out the rules.

"They even took down the (signs) in front of our campaign headquarters. They said they were too close," said Rose Gilmore, campaign manager for Markham Liberal Tony Wong.

Mr. Harrison's department told her each candidate can place only one sign on each corner. "But you know how they get winged? No wings," she said, referring to a practice of doubling up signs so that they are visible from two directions.

D'Arcy Pigott, chairperson for Markham Tory Dave Tsubouchi, said the campaign was not told "winged" signs are unacceptable.

'A lot of (the candidates) seem to know about it but disregard it.'

Campaign organizers were also not told, he said, they needed a sign permit

from the Town of Markham. "Had any request been made, we would have paid for that permit," he said.

Town employees have taken down some signs for Oak Ridges Liberal Helena Jaczek along Bethesda Road in Whitchurch-Stouffville, according to her campaign manager Teri Seymour. "We're just trying to stay within the rules."

Jackie Cousins, a spokesperson for the riding's Tory incumbent Frank Klees, said campaign workers have "noticed the odd

one taken down," but she added it is normal to lose some signs.

SAFETY REASONS

The "restricted" intersections, including several on Yonge Street, 14th Avenue and Hwy. 7, in Markham, were chosen by the region for safety reasons.

They were also chosen because meeting a requirement to keep signs 10 metres back from pavement may leave them no room on the public road allowance, Mr. Harrison said.

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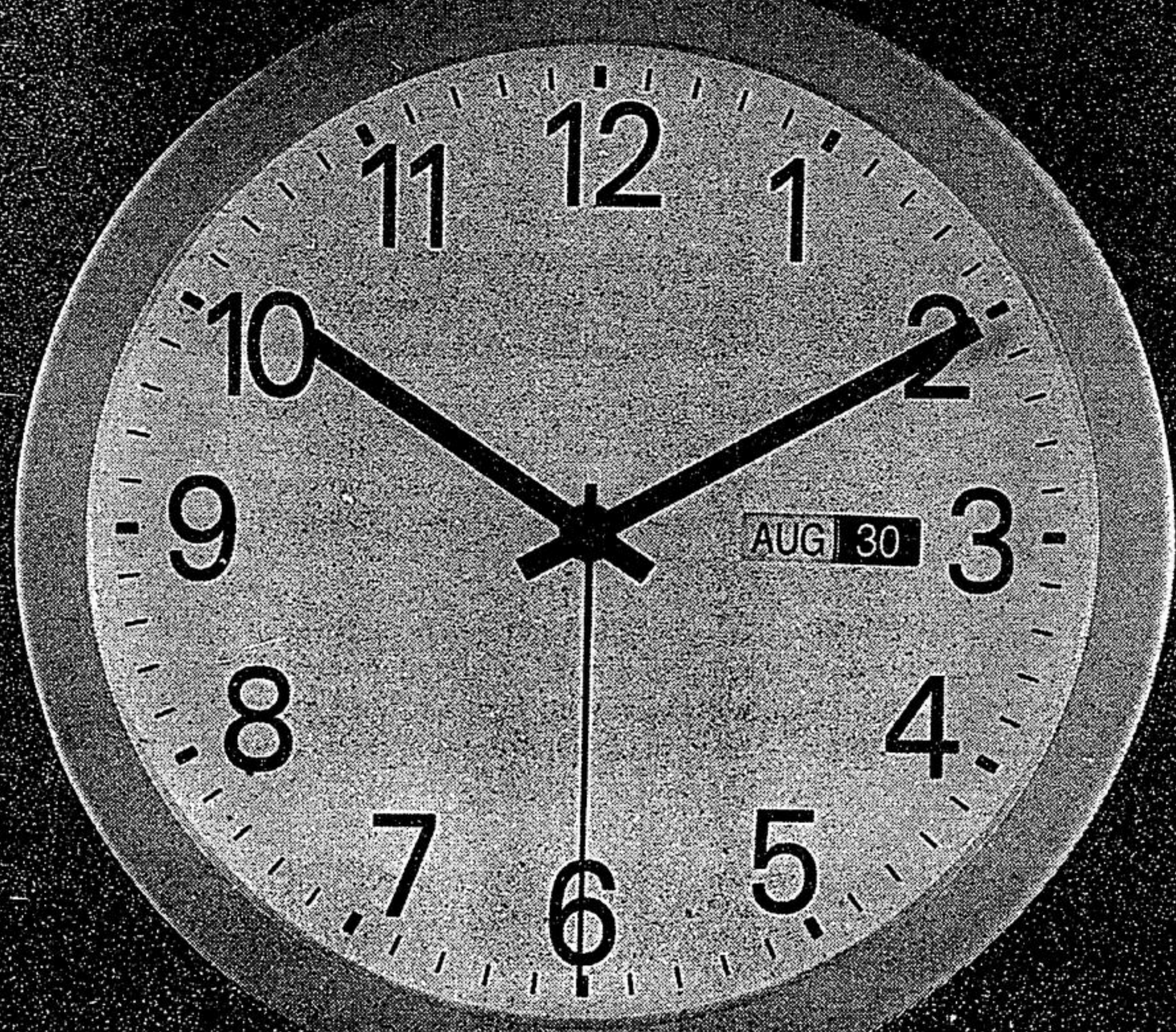
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