

OPINION

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

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Editorial

Growth won't prevent tax hike

So, you thought the growth coming to Whitchurch-Stouffville would mean a lower tax bill in your mailbox?

After all, all those new homeowners could pick up the slack and eliminate a municipal tax hike.

Wrong.

Even with all those homes, especially in Stouffville, as well as industrial and commercial development, the municipal portion of your tax bill will go up 3.9 per cent this year.

Not even one of the largest Wal-Marts in Canada can save us from a tax hike, ratepayers.

That the hike is down from the original projection of 7.9 per cent may make some councillors look good. But the original figure was just a starting point. That's it. No civic letters of commendation should be presented on this one.

The 3.9-per-cent increase means the owner of a house assessed at \$330,000 will pay \$896 on the municipal portion of his tax bill.

Last year, the average homeowner paid \$862 to the town, \$1,562 to the region and \$871 for schools.

We applaud council for giving the Latham Gallery a one-time grant of \$50,000 to help sustain its operations this year. The fine arts gallery has proven itself in this community.

Ongoing support, as requested by gallery officials during last year's election, is overdue. The old town hall should be considered as the gallery's new home, if the town proceeds with plans for a theatre elsewhere.

All projects in the area of the arts will be appreciated by a community that feels it has been ignored in the name of sports facilities for too long.

Growth won't pay for the renovation of the old town hall, but it will play for the construction of some new facilities. Exhibit A is the town's third hockey rink, which should open in two years. No site has been found, but the tab will be picked up by development fees.

If you live in a neighbourhood of any age, you should be seeing your tax dollars at work this year.

The budget allows road repairs to be done at a much faster rate, with the town dedicating about \$1.3 million, which is almost twice the 2006 repair budget. The town is seeking a substantial provincial grant to help with roads.

That's good news for the many roads in need of help and the vehicles that traverse them. Manitoba Street, for example, is a municipal disgrace.

Money to repair roads and provide fine arts programming is money well spent in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

STOUFFVILLE HIGH SCHOOL HOCKEY TEAMS MAKE HISTORY. BOTH WIN PROVINCIAL CHAMPIONSHIPS — A FIRST — ANYWHERE!



Off The Top

with **Jim Mason**

Trying to do the environmentally correct thing

You're a good person. You hold the door for others. You wave other drivers in. You donate to charity. You recycle. Or at least you try to. It was that final attempt at goodness that riled some environmentally conscious of your good neighbours this spring.

And I can't say I blame their green selves.

They were doing the right thing, placing their recyclables in their blue boxes. If they had a big week, they put the extras in clear plastic bags curbside, with the OK of the municipality.

That blessing ended abruptly and not even papal intervention will bring it back to life.

At first blush, the bag ban also makes sense. Why add more packaging and work as we attempt to save the planet?

But the number of blue boxes some of these recyclers would require would be cost-prohibitive. One resident drove her car, the back filled with bags of items to be recycled, to The Sun-Tribune to prove her point.

The bags had been rejected, without warning, that day. Left at the curb.

That's what stung the most, readers told us. There was no advance notice.

There wasn't time, all levels of government said.

The Region of York told the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville the week before the ban was implemented. No time to sent a news release, post the notice on the town's web site or on the municipality's page of advertising in The Sun-Tribune.

And politicians wonder why residents are cynical?

Those residents must now choose between spending part of their vacation allowance or new car fund on additional blue boxes or putting the recyclables in a green bag and returning to the curb.

As much of a non-option as Plan B should be.

Jim Mason is editor of The Sun-Tribune.

Letters to the Editor

High-tech incinerator not same as older organic recycling facility

Re: *One York site on incinerator short list, March 29.*

In response to the comparisons of the proposed thermal treatment facility in York Region to the current Halton Recycling facility and the concerns over potential odours, I would like to state that the Halton facility in Newmarket is a composting facility that processes organic material.

It is the organic material in our waste stream that creates the offensive odours, not the dry garbage fraction.

Add the fact the Halton facility was not built properly in the first place, as it was missing key components in its technology, resulted in the offensive odours from the site.

Hence, the additional costs and renovations to the site over the past couple of years to try and eliminate its odour problems.

The region is also implementing the green bin program to source separate all of its organic waste and, by the fall, all York municipalities should be on board. This will eliminate the smelly portion from our garbage or as the experts like to say from our residual waste.

Therefore, any notion that offensive odours will be generated from this facility are very minute.

The advances in technology over the years in thermal treatment of waste as is seen in Europe has proven to be an effective means of dealing with our residual waste while having the capability to generate electricity in the process.

The facility in Brampton is a perfect exam-

ple as you would never know by looking at that it is an incineration facility.

The Stouffville Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Stouffville Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space. Write: Letters to the Editor, 6290 Main St., Stouffville, L4A 1G7, e-mail jmason@yrmg.com or fax 905-640-8778

DEREK SAWYER
STOUFFVILLE

7.9% tax hike proposal not ho-hum

Re: *Tax hike shrinks, March 29.*

I find the cavalier attitude The Sun-Tribune takes in covering the proposed and ultimate tax increase appalling.

The initial 7.9-per-cent hike was reported as just another ho-hum tax bill. Toronto residents are up in arms over the 3.9 per cent they are being assessed and the major newspapers and media reflect that outrage.

Here in Stouffville, no such critical reporting. I think if you want to be taken seriously as a newspaper, your reporting should reflect a little analysis.

That a 7.9-per-cent increase was even taken seriously is an affront to all the taxpayers of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

W. BRUNOW
STOUFFVILLE

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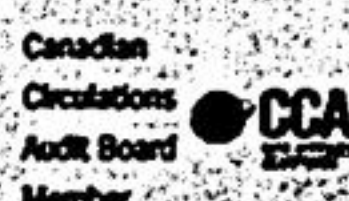
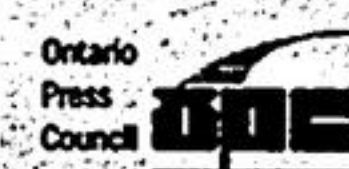
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