



OAKVILLE

Ward 4

NEWS

2005



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In your opinion...what is the single most important issue facing Oakville today? That was the big question the Environics Research Group asked Oakville residents last year, and the results are clear. "The largest proportion by far name urban sprawl/rapid development; this proportion has increased dramatically since 2001."

Not surprisingly, the survey also found that words used most often to describe what residents like **best** about Oakville are, "small community, quiet, heritage, green space, parks and recreation."

Those qualities are exactly what brought my family here 11 years ago. Nestled between the lake to the south, and the forests and rolling countryside to the north, Oakville seemed like an ideal community to raise a family.

But like you, I became worried about our growth and sprawl - worried enough to run for a seat on Council in order to debate and vote on these issues. I can assure you that speaking out on growth issues hasn't always made me the most popular guy in some circles. That's fine with me because I believe that our future health, prosperity and overall quality of life are dependent upon how well we deal with these issues - now.

One issue that requires our immediate attention is the cost of growth to the existing taxpayer.

A report to the town of Oakville in 2004 states that the estimated net capital costs of services for payment by developers to the town will have a *shortfall of \$110.3 million*. In addition, a 2005 budget discussion document produced by the town of Oakville states that the capital gap is estimated at \$200 million plus.

When development charges don't cover the cost of development, you and I, as taxpayers, pay the shortfall.

Development charges must clearly be re-evaluated to absorb the full costs of growth.

It gets worse. You may recall that town staff released a report last year stating that we must purchase lands for our Natural Heritage System in order to manage them. The price tag was estimated at \$232 million. This option would see taxpayers' money going to large development companies.

Do we really need to purchase forests to have a successful Natural Heritage System? No.

For the past two years I've had the privilege of representing Halton Region on the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) and it seems the NEC does not share Oakville's belief that a forest has to be "managed" in order to remain sustainable. In fact, the NEC asked Halton Region to reconsider its proposal to actively manage many of its forests because *the Commission does not endorse a program of active forest management in the Niagara Escarpment Plan area.*

Well, if the NEC, whose mission is to conserve the UNESCO-designated Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve, has some wisdom to share on the subject of forestry, perhaps we should listen.

I believe we can follow the example set by the Niagara Escarpment Commission. Let's protect a healthy, sustainable Natural Heritage System in north Oakville by zoning the land for preservation, just as the Province has told us we can. This would allow the landowners to continue to own and use their land, with the same rights they enjoyed under the law at the time they purchased the land - and it would allow for protection of much needed greenspace.

cont on page 2...

It's hard to stay optimistic sometimes, given what we hear on the news every day. However, I find that occasionally, bad things that happen provide us with opportunities to re-examine our assumptions and inspire us to make change.

Often, seemingly small issues are significant because they are symptomatic of a much larger problem. For example, this summer a couple of beavers settled in a stream near Merchant's Gate. Some neighbours in the area welcomed the newcomers with a sense of fascination, excitement and even pride. Others did not. The beavers had taken down several young, softwood trees to build their lodge, which resulted in some damming of the stream. Some residents raised concerns about safety and the possibility of flooding.

All the issues had to be weighed. In an effort to find a way to allow the beavers to stay, we considered wrapping the trees to protect them, and something called a "beaver baffle." This device would allow the creek to flow, and the beavers to maintain their dam. Unfortunately, water samples taken detected mosquito larvae. Since the possible threat of West Nile Virus could not be ruled out, our efforts to introduce the beaver baffle had to be abandoned.

A plea to the Ministry of Natural Resources to move the beavers to another location failed, because apparently beavers do not re-locate easily. So, these resourceful and intelligent little mammals were sentenced to death. And to make matters worse, from what I understand, the type of trap used to kill the beaver causes pain and suffering to the animal before it dies.

This issue, and others like it concerning our environment, are indicators that something is out of sync. We know very little about the delicate inter-connections that exist

in nature, and the role each life form plays. Are the actions we take to "fix" one situation today going to create a whole new set of problems down the line? And how could that new set of problems affect us? After all, we are part of that intricate web of inter-connections.

Clearly the time has come to consider the bigger picture. I think we need to bring back the balance between nature and humanity, and we can only do that by providing enough space for nature to live and flourish. The urbanization of 7600 acres north of Dundas will result in further destruction of wildlife habitat, so we must start there.

Let's begin by giving nature more room:

1. We've already been given a wonderful gift of 750 acres of public land in north Oakville. We must make sure it stays natural and is not developed. (See article on page 2.)
2. We must ensure a generous Natural Heritage System is preserved in north Oakville (See page 3.)
3. We must ensure that subdivisions are built with larger buffers around streams, forests and ravines.

We all know that our welfare is linked to the welfare of nature, and that includes the beaver. To restore a balance between humans and nature is to ensure a future for ourselves and for our children.



"If the environment can't support beavers, ducks or moose, how long will it be able to support people?"

Commemorative Stamp Bulletin, Canada Post

Dear Ward 4 Resident:

You elected us on platforms of growth management, and fiscal and environmental responsibility, and we continue to work very hard to respond to those concerns. That's why we're devoting so much attention to these issues in our newsletter. Sometimes it's frustrating as we see more smog days, traffic jams and environmental degradation. But now is not the time to be pessimistic, because along with some pretty big challenges, we also have a couple of rare opportunities, where we can take positive action (you'll read about these in our newsletter). Future roads, houses and plazas will happen - that's a given. The extent of protection for the natural environment, however, will be determined, to a large extent, by the resolve and determination shown by each one of us.

Al and Renee

OUR PRICELESS GIFT OF PARKLAND NEEDS A GUARDIAN -- FAST!

It's spectacular, it's pristine and it's ours. One year ago, the Province responded to enormous public pressure by announcing that 750 acres of publicly owned countryside in north Oakville, located in Ward 4, would be protected from development. It was understood that these lands would remain natural - a kind of green oasis amid the intense urban development slated for north Oakville.

Recently however, the majority of Council voted in favour of a plan to actively seek out land-use opportunities that could see conservation land replaced by pavement, parking lots and playing fields.

As Oakville grows, so does the need for more facilities, such as ice pads and soccer fields. We fully support these, when properly planned, for the right location. Oakville showed foresight, years ago, when it purchased land for these purposes, called North Park, located north of Dundas Street, west of Neyagawa Blvd. **But it seems the Town may now be deviating from that plan, with its intention to build on our newly protected conservation lands. Your Ward 4 councillors did not support this plan.**

This priceless gift of moraine, forest, wetland and meadow is not "vacant land" waiting to be "utilized". We believe that once the first intrusion is approved, it will open the door to future development and our parkland will eventually end up

paved over and absorbed into the larger urban landscape. The effect of this lost green space may not be felt until the new subdivisions are built, and by then it will be too late to act.

It's going to take the vigilance of our entire community to ensure that our priceless gift of conservation land receives "ironclad" protection in perpetuity. Fortunately, we have an opportunity to do just that.



Conservation Halton is willing to accept stewardship of the lands, and care for them for future generations.

Over the past year, the Province has been in discussions with Conservation Halton, and **we urge the Province to transfer control of the park to this**

conservation body. We must insist that any transfer of ownership comes with a clear assurance of ironclad protection - protection so strong that it will stand up to tough tests in the future, including the possibility of developer-friendly elected officials, conservation board members or other decision makers who may try to see the land developed.

If you want to see our park under the care and ownership of Conservation Halton, write to your MPP and tell him so. Tell him that any transfer of ownership must come with an ironclad promise to keep the land pristine and safe from development in perpetuity (contact information can be found at www.elgar.ca). Talk about the issue with your friends and family. We don't have to be experts on the subject to speak out, and we don't have to accept any excuses. This gift belongs to all of us. It'll be up to us to make sure it stays that way.

AND DON'T FORGET, WE STILL HAVE TO NAME OUR PARK!

Some suggestions we've heard so far include, *Un-paved Paradise*, *Sprawl Buster Park*, *The Oakville Green*, *People's Park* and *Glenorchy Conservation Area*.

What do you think? Send us your suggestions and we'll post a list to share with you on our website, www.elgar.ca. **Maybe the prize for the best name will be Parkland that gets to stay Parkland - FOREVER.**

ABOUT CONSERVATION HALTON

Since 1958 Conservation Halton has served the residents of Halton Region as the community-based environmental agency that protects, restores and manages the natural resources in its watershed. Conservation Halton is recognized for its stewardship of creeks, forests and Niagara Escarpment lands through science based programs and services. Councillor Elgar has sat on the Board of Directors since 2001.

Mission Statement:

"To protect and enhance the natural environment from lake to escarpment for present and future generations."

What Conservation Halton Says:

"The ability to set aside such a large conservation protection area would allow for the preservation of a variety of habitats that are important to the ecological integrity of our natural landscapes".



"POWER" TO THE PEOPLE!

That's "People Of West Oakville Residents", a committee led by Stationmaster Lane resident, Beatrix Morralle, that includes about 100 families in the area of Heritage Way, Reeve's Gate and Stationmaster. They've come together to fight a developer's plan to build a 207-unit, nine-story apartment building in their very unique neighbourhood, which includes the environmentally sensitive area around Fourteen Mile Creek, and land that has been part of the Parkway Belt West Plan (PBWP) since 1978.

These residents have clearly done their homework, and packed Council Chambers earlier this fall to express their concerns.

They say that people moved to this part of Oakville because of the quality of this particular greenspace - the trees, trails, habitat and wildlife, and they want these features to be preserved so that 50 years from now residents in and around the Fourteen Mile Creek watershed will still be able to appreciate these natural features.

They are worried about the long-term environmental impacts of building so close to Fourteen Mile Creek, which supports habitat for the Provincially threatened fish species, Redside Dace.

That's why POWOR asked Council to reject a request made by the developer to remove a parcel of land from the PBWP. These residents want the Town to uphold its Official Plan. In addition to environmental issues, they say it's unfair to change the density in a neighbourhood after residents have already moved in.

Beatrix feels that residents need to have a stronger voice in the planning process. "Developers should not be able to control where and when development should occur. People who live in the affected area should have more of a say."

As Councillors, we are proud to support these residents in their fight to preserve the integrity, character and environment of their neighbour-

hood. We believe that communities should be planned with higher density housing built first, not added later, so that residents can decide what type of neighbourhood they choose to live in, right from the start. In addition, preserving the integrity of the environmentally sensitive area around Fourteen Mile Creek must be a priority for the Town, as these important areas continue to be lost to development.

Update: On November 7, Council voted in favour of a motion introduced by Councillor Elgar, and seconded by Councillor Sandelowsky, whereby the Town would NOT support the removal of the land from the Parkway Belt West Plan. The motion also included strategies for protecting these lands against possible development in the future. POWOR now begins lobbying the Province to keep those lands in the Parkway Belt Plan. Good Luck!

Elgar editorial cont...

As the Ontario Environmental Commissioner, Gord Miller warned, "If the province keeps encouraging population growth in Southern Ontario the quality

of life will be ruined. The Greater Toronto Area for example, is already choking on traffic, drowning in garbage and running out of electricity."

We've got to do better. Innovative approaches to retaining greenspace, is one example of how we can do just that.

UPDATE: LANDS NORTH OF DUNDAS

Petition to Save Natural Heritage System

A Natural Heritage System is a living, breathing natural wildlife corridor consisting of forests connected by wetlands, meadows and streams.

Currently, the breathtaking expanse of forest and meadowlands that stretch across north Oakville comprises a Natural Heritage System that provides an important link to the Bronte, Sixteen Mile and Joshua's Creek Valleys and acts as a spur off the Provincial corridor associated with the Niagara Escarpment.

According to Conservation Halton, the land north of Dundas supports a large number of provincially and regionally rare plant and animal species, and vegetative communities. Pretty impressive!

Maybe that's why the preservation of a Natural Heritage System became the number one issue for hundreds of residents who jammed town hall night after night during the public meetings regarding Oakville's growth plan, (OPA 198) in 2002.

Has a Natural Heritage System been mapped out for Preservation?

Yes. Although urbanization will destroy much of the natural landscape north of Dundas, work has been done to map out an east-west system for protection from development. Experts representing 3 levels of government collaborated, using science, to identify the highest quality natural features in north Oakville and linked them together on a map as a Natural Heritage System. This was dubbed the Inter Agency Review (IAR) map, and the results received widespread public support as a reasonable expectation for preservation.

What's the Problem?

Developers have their own version of a Natural Heritage System that varies greatly from the IAR mapping. It is much smaller in size and will greatly reduce the amount of greenspace in north Oakville. Developers are in the process of taking their plan to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) for approval.

What you can do.

Although the issue is before the OMB, negotiations continue, and governments need to be reminded that people care about the issue of diminishing greenspace in their community. Governments need to be reminded that people realize that greenspace is linked to the overall health and well-being of a community. Governments need to be reminded that the Natural Heritage System was stated to be "a first priority" of the Town of Oakville, in its growth plan.

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND SIGN THE E-PETITION SUPPORTING THE IAR NATURAL HERITAGE SYSTEM. SHARE THE PETITION WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY AND COLLEAGUES. Visit www.elgar.ca.

The information you supply will be sent to Ontario MPP Kevin Flynn who will present the petition to Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Legislature.

Why Save the Natural Heritage System?

- We can't afford not to! Air pollution cost Halton residents an estimated \$296 MILLION in 2001 and takes on average, one life every single week - forests are our only air cleaners!
- Help to balance massive urbanization coming to the north
- Most of Oakville's remaining forests, meadows, streams and wetlands are located there
- Lies on the Trafalgar Moraine, headwaters of several of Oakville's major creeks
- Where else will wildlife go?
- Oakville residents say they want MORE not LESS greenspace
- Area is home to rare wetlands, which filter and clean our water and provide important habitat for birds, plants and wildlife
- Oakville's current forest cover already lowest in Halton Region at 12.2%, far below the recommended 30% for a healthy watershed

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THE FIGHT FOR NORTH OAKVILLE

- In May 2002, Oakville Council narrowly passed its highly contested growth plan (OPA 198) to urbanize 7,600 acres of countryside, north of Dundas Street.
- A coalition of developers appealed the town's plan to the OMB.
- Local environmental groups, Oakvillegreen and Clear the Air Coalition appealed the town's plan to the OMB.
- A committee of experts, from three levels of government, was created to identify the highest quality natural features and link them together on a map as a Natural Heritage System (IAR process).
- In light of this impartial committee, environmental groups settled their OMB appeal to await the results of the committee's work, and thus saved taxpayers the cost of a lengthy hearing.
- Developers then settled and the OMB hearing on OPA 198 was dropped.
- IAR map of the Natural Heritage System was completed and received widespread public support as a reasonable expectation for preservation.
- Town staff recommended the lands for the Natural Heritage System be "managed" and therefore had to be purchased at an estimated quarter of a billion dollars.
- Province (a higher planning authority than the Town) stated we do not have to purchase lands to protect them. "Any municipality in Ontario that wants to protect a Natural Heritage System can do so without having to buy the land."
- Niagara Escarpment Commission confirmed that lands that are not managed often regenerate more successfully than "managed" lands (report at www.elgar.ca).
- In 2005 pre hearings took place as developers appealed to the OMB again, armed with their own plans for north Oakville. Developers' plan drastically reduces the Natural Heritage System in both size and function.
- This hearing is expected to begin in 2006.
- Residents petition the Province for the preservation of the Natural Heritage System.

SENIORS LOBBY FOR IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Oakville residents may call it "The Peanut", but 133 senior citizens, including war veterans, former nurses, several centenarians, and even a boxing champion - call it home. West Oak Village, a long-term care facility located within the split on Third Line, north of Upper Middle Road, has been part of our community since 2002.

It is also home to some pretty determined activists who have been working tirelessly to improve pedestrian safety in the area. They've seen it all, and have documented speeders, cars travelling the wrong way and pedestrians, including those in wheelchairs struggling to cross the road within the 15 seconds that the "Walk" signal flashes. They expressed concern not only for their own safety, but also for that of children crossing Third Line between a park on one side, and a plaza which houses a day centre, on the other side.

Earlier this fall, Councillors Al and Renee

met with concerned seniors and staff, as well as staff from the town, where seniors provided a demonstration of what it was like to cross Third Line to go the plaza on the west side. Although the "Walk" signal met minimum standards, it

clearly posed a challenge to many residents. Concerned residents, their families and staff recommend the following:

1. Lengthen the time the Walk signal flashes.
2. Install flashing yellow lights to warn motorists

when they will have to stop ahead.

3. Install "senior crossing" signs on Third Line warning motorists to use extra caution in the area. As Councillor Al asked, "If we have them for children, and we have them for geese, why wouldn't we have them for our seniors?"

This just in...Town staff have agreed to all of the recommendations. Well done!



Councillors Sandelowsky and Elgar meet with seniors, staff and families.

YOU ASKED, WE ANSWERED...

Dear Al and Renee:

I like to watch Council meetings on TV but I find the big decisions about what's going to happen in Oakville aren't being made there. What's with that?

Decisions regarding growth issues and development applications, such as the Creekbank issue, are made at Planning and Development meetings, which are held on alternate Monday evenings. And you're right - these meetings are NOT generally televised. We will request that P & D meetings be televised. Good idea.

Dear Al and Renee:

Are you guys the "no growth" councillors I've read about in the paper?

We are not "no growth". We are opposed, however, to growth that is out of control. We are also opposed to growth that is not well planned, not balanced and growth that negatively affects the environment and the quality of our lives. That's why we got involved, years ago. There has been reference to the "no growth" councillors in a local paper, with no names given, so we understand your confusion.

Dear Al and Renee:

Is it true that trees planted in new subdivisions won't live beyond 50 or even 40 years?

We've learned that the average life span for a typical urban tree is only about 25 to 30 years. This is a very serious problem that we feel requires immediate attention. Soil compaction, nutrient deficient soil, pollution and other environmental factors negatively affect tree health. Recognizing there is a problem is the first step. We plan to bring this issue to the attention of Council in the very near future. Stay tuned.

IN A NUTSHELL.....

Boulevard Beautification:

In Sept 2004, Councillor Sandelowsky introduced a motion that was approved by Council, for staff to research a boulevard adoption program, similar to one implemented with great success in Burlington, in an effort to bring colour and beauty to these high profile public spaces. Stay tuned.

Public Notification:

Your Ward 4 councillors continue to have discussions with staff to find better ways to notify the public regarding important issues and events. They've ensured that all meetings are listed on the town website and continue to push for public notices that are more reader-friendly.

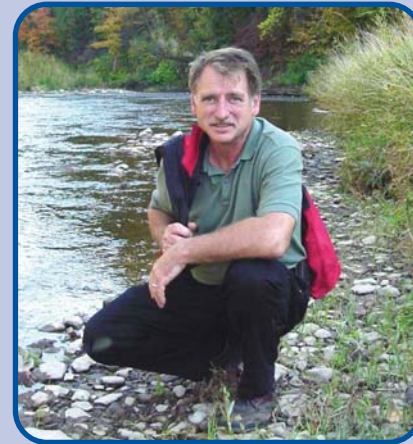
Zoning lands for preservation:

The Inter Agency Review Committee agree that Ontario's policy led planning system, through the Planning Act and Provincial Policy Statement, supported by local and regional policies, allows the Town to protect the Natural Heritage/Open Space System through Official Plan designation and zoning.

Elgar wins Carolinian Canada Award:

Councillor Elgar is this year's recipient of the Carolinian Canada award, in recognition of his outstanding contribution towards the protection of the natural diversity and natural habitats of Ontario's Carolinian Zone.

His award was presented at the Carolinian Stakeholders meeting held recently in Ingersoll, Ontario.



Carolinian Canada is a non-profit coalition of over 40 government and non-government groups and many individuals working to conserve the ecological diversity of Canada's most threatened region.

THANKING SOME SPECIAL WARD 4 RESIDENTS

We'd like to acknowledge all the residents who have gotten out of their easy chairs to work to make a positive impact on our community. We know there are many, many more of you out there who are quietly contributing to the quality of life in Ward 4, and while we may not know your names, we thank you all!

Case Feenstra (pictured right) is the resident responsible for construction of the ice rink on Old Abbey Lane last winter. This year, Case has plans for a bigger and better rink. One October afternoon, we happened to catch Case planting tulips around the Glen Abbey sign on Fourth Line.



Creekbank:

These residents formed a committee to fight a proposed 9-storey apartment building to be built near an environmentally sensitive area on Fourteen Mile Creek.

Pictured from left to right are Joanna labonni, Fred Springer, Beatrix and Keith Morrallee, Gus Marquez (missing are Ilver Fabbri, Elliot Dyer and Elda Laing).



Seniors:

These residents and staff from West Oak Village lobbied for changes that will improve pedestrian safety on Third Line.

Pictured from left to right are Michelle Fleming, Resident Services Co-ordinator (standing), Sadie Gault, resident, Hazel Taylor, Family Council Member and Albert Brierly, resident.

Katie Williams has quietly spent time over the last 2 summers maintaining the lovely flower garden that brings the intersection at Old Abbey Lane and Nottingham Gate to life. (photo unavailable)



Amy Rolf von den Baumen, Linda and Graham Burton and Mike Starr (Principal of Mother Teresa) were among the dedicated individuals who worked to improve safety in their neighbourhood by urging Council to approve a new stop sign at the intersection of West Oak Trails Ridge Landing. Pictured is crossing guard Blanca Pinglo, on duty!

Roger Lapworth (pictured right) led the charge in his neighbourhood to have the glaring lights in West Oak Park to be tilted away from people's backyards.



A special thanks to artist Steve Ilott for creating our beaver cartoon. (photo unavailable)

WHY OAKVILLE NEEDS A PRIVATE TREE BY-LAW

We've all noticed the demolition of older homes in Oakville to make way for new homes, town-homes or condo projects. But have you wondered why so many beautiful, mature trees are destroyed in the process? Can't more of them be saved? We believe they can, with the help of an effective private tree by-law.

Currently, Oakville has a by-law to protect trees on public property, but we do not have a by-law to regulate and protect trees from development on private property.

Not so in Toronto and Mississauga where trees are protected under both public and private tree by-laws. Recently we met with Mississauga Forest Manager Tony Fleischmann to learn more about that city's private tree by-law, and came away with some encouraging news as well as a sobering message regarding our future.

We learned that a private tree by-law does not prevent a property owner from developing his or

her property. That right is protected under Provincial law. What it does do is alert the city of someone's intent to cut trees, and that puts an important process into play. A tree by-law inspector may then visit the site and discuss the plan with the property owner. Often, this results in alterations to the plan that allow for more trees to be saved. There are also occasions where a good pruning is all that's required to solve a home-owner's problem.

Fleischmann noted another benefit of the by-law has been a shift in attitude at city hall. Trees on private property have begun to receive more focus and recognition in the planning process!

And how does the future look for young trees planted in our newer neighbourhoods? Will they be the healthy, mature trees of tomorrow? Fleischmann doesn't think so. Modern construction methods rely on the use of heavy machinery that compacts the fragile earth. Topsoil is scraped off into huge piles where precious micro-organisms

are smothered and die. New trees are planted in this depleted, compacted dirt, often without room for future root growth. These conditions contribute to what Fleischmann refers to as new urban "vegetative slums." This is food for thought as we head into a time of massive development in north Oakville.

What can be done to ensure that Oakville residents enjoy the benefits of mature trees in the future? First of all, we are asking for your input and support as we prepare to bring this issue to Council in the very near future. Check our website for details at www.elgar.ca. In addition, we must begin to focus attention on current construction methods in order to improve the environment in which new trees are planted.

Mature trees not only add beauty, but also cool and clean the air. We need to make sure they play a prominent role in Oakville's future. We hope you'll support a strong private tree by-law.

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Ward 4 News is produced to keep residents informed of important issues in their Ward, and to foster dialogue between residents and Ward Councillors. Due to Canada Post distribution areas, some residences outside of Ward 4 boundaries may receive this newsletter. We apologize for any confusion and hope that you still find the information useful. Mailing Address: 1225 Trafalgar Road, P.O. Box 310, Oakville, ON L6J 5A6 www.oakville.ca

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