

THE WELLINGTON ADVERTISER

The Wellington Advertiser was founded and registered in March, 1968 as a long-needed service to the retail and service establishments and the shopping public of suburban and rural Wellington County.

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EDITORIAL



Dave Adsett
PUBLISHER

Time to move on proposals

Housing is needed – it's as simple as that. The answer to meeting that demand is far more complex.

Provincial regulations, professional preferences, local planning authorities and neighbourhood desires make it pretty tough to get anything done. For proof of that, let's look at two local developers and their attempts to bring rental housing to the downtown cores of Elora and Fergus.

Local investors have spent considerable time and funds getting to the point of an official public meeting. There, as suspected from community comments over the past dozens of months, opponents to their plans raised issues from altering the heritage setting, to scale of the proposal and heights that would appear out of place. Parking and traffic issues were also raised.

While all of those worries have merit and should receive due consideration, it is past time to move on and see decisions made.

And guess what, not everyone is going to be happy.

Change is something all communities across the county are facing. Tearing down structures of dubious value and replacing them with structures that meet modern needs can be a positive in a community. In-fill development and re-purposing lands is long overdue.

Driving through Rockwood recently we were impressed to see some under-used parcels being maximized with residential offerings. Close to shopping and commuter busing makes sense. Similarly, in Mount Forest, a large redevelopment at the north end of town is imposing, but a necessary evolution if the mantra of building up is to replace the concept of growing out. Redevelopment in the north end of Fergus a few years back has added tremendously to the housing stock available to rent. These are private sector investments.

In many of these cases the nega-

tivity and perils presented as reasons not to approve the application never came to pass. As we have suggested numerous times over the years, the outcome to perceived change is far less critical than feared and not as awesome as presented. It is just different.

As our society matures and the economic disparity amongst citizens becomes more apparent, ancillary elements of housing will need to change. A segment of the population has shed the notion of home ownership, having a vehicle, needing superfluous square footage, instead choosing to live a more minimalist lifestyle – or having one forced upon them.

Recognizing that, why should demands for parking based on a previous time hamper efforts to provide rental opportunities? If tenants don't have a car and will sign-off on a parking spot, why insist on archaic standards?

Access to elevators in multi-sto-

rey buildings creates new spaces for residents who, due to age or physical impairment, require such a service. Restricting those who have difficulties with stairs to the ground floor hardly seems equitable. Is there not a sense of compromise if a fourth storey helps offset that cost?

Since the 1980s all levels of government have failed to expand the housing stock and meet demand. They didn't want to invest in Canadians and relied instead on the private sector. The same conversation can be had about retirement homes and seniors lodging, which factor mightily into housing stock strategies.

In the end, these two local investors are willing to take a gamble on providing much-needed housing. The concepts may need to be tweaked or fine-tuned, but at least they are trying to do something to meet housing needs locally.

Answers need to flow soon.

“Kevin (Cox) is 33. We just can't let him die.”

Erin resident Tracey Wallace

Letters to the Editor

Separate industry, homes

Dear Editor:

The application to accommodate a major trucking facility at the corner of Brock and Gilmore Roads in Aberfoyle requires rezoning from highway commercial/secondary agriculture to industrial.

Currently there are several trucking facilities and industrial businesses between highway 401 and McLean Road. The subject land serves as a buffer between these industries and the residential communities. This is a good thing but having a trucking facility immediately adjacent to residences is not.

With potentially over 120 tractors and trailers and 150 employees the traffic problems will be significant. Trucks leaving the facility on Brock Road will have to either turn left across four lanes on Brock Road or turn right and use the roundabout at Gilmore. A perfect storm in either scenario.

Employees will enter and exit onto Gilmore Road. The traffic studies assumed that all employees would turn left on Gilmore and use the roundabout. There will be only about six car lengths from the exit to the roundabout which undoubtedly will create a back up on Gilmore. Access to the roundabout off Gilmore can be difficult at the best of times, but with added truck/employee traffic it could be near impossible. Cars coming off the roundabout and going east on Gilmore would be confronted with the backlog of employee traffic trying to get onto the roundabout.

The traffic studies do not take into account that employees, impatient with the congestion turning left, will turn right towards Victoria Road; another perfect storm. Gilmore is not intended for heavy traffic. It is a gravel road with narrow shoulders and is used by joggers, dog walkers and school children. Access onto to Victoria is difficult because of the limited visibility. In both directions, a real accident potential location.

Please keep the industries and residences separated and say “no” to the rezoning.

Gwen and Jim Burgess,
Aberfoyle

opment at 350 St. Andrew Street West in Fergus, brought forth information and community concerns.

Is a four-storey building with one third of the roof covered with mechanical equipment really a four-storey building or a five-storey building? To the viewer it's five storeys. The bylaw says it's four.

The word “accessible” was banded about without a clear meaning. An accessible bathroom is 70 square feet and larger. How would that impact the tiny units? Vehicles are becoming electric. With limited parking, where are they going to charge?

Many other concerns and some support was expressed. The vast majority of the proposal is within the Ontario Building Code and existing local bylaws. What the developer is asking for is more height.

Chris Woode,
Fergus

Newspaper 'a treat'

Dear Editor:

RE: Wellington Advertiser named best newspaper in its class in Ontario for fourth straight year, April 20.

What an accolade for our Wellington Advertiser to be named best newspaper in its class for the fourth straight year. It's no wonder we love receiving our newspaper each week, often tucked out of the weather right in the mailbox no less.

It's full of information from beginning to end. I, for one, would miss it if it were ever discontinued.

It's always a treat to see what people are doing all across the county. Interesting to learn what the school kids have been up to, what's happening on the entertainment side, what our busy Senator Rob Black has been doing on behalf of agriculture and so on. There is something for everyone in our Wellington Advertiser.

Kelly Waterhouse's column about her son turning 21? Wow, such level headed and wisdom filled advice she has handed her son.

Raising children to be responsible adults is the hardest job we will ever do. Good on you Kelly.

Liz Hughes,
Puslinch

'Primarily ceremonial'

Dear Editor:

It costs around \$60 million per year to fund the governor general and lieutenant governors' role in Canada.

Surely there are significant savings to be had for these primarily ceremonial positions. The rare constitutional issues that arise can be handled by the chief justice of the Supreme Court who assumed the role temporarily when Julie Payette resigned.

It is a significant ceremonial role but surely it could function on a lesser budget. Perhaps with some meaningful reduction in this area (and some control over the prime minister's vacation and travel costs) there might be enough left over to repair or replace the national embarrassment known as 24 Sussex Drive without running up our seemingly unlimited national credit card debt.

Craig Sullivan,
Fergus

Protect health care

Dear Editor:

How many of us have gone to the emergency department at the hospital and waited for hours, sometimes in agony, for someone to take care of us? Are you sick of being told that you then have hours more until you can see the doctor?

It is bound to make you angry, frightened and wishing you could do something about it. Think about what nurses and doctors have to face when we finally get into the treatment room!

Health care workers, unions and medical experts have been ringing the alarm bells for years now. If hospital CEOs, and our MP Michael Chong, hear from the community they serve, we can convince them to

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WEEKLY POLL

The Wellington Advertiser offers weekly polls on topics of interest to our readers on our website at www.wellingtonadvertiser.com.

THIS WEEK'S QUESTION:

Is four storeys too high for housing in downtown areas?

- YES
- NO

Last week's results:

Do you have a positive perception of local policing?

- YES - 62%
- NO - 38%

*Vote by clicking on the 'weekly poll' tab on our home page at wellingtonadvertiser.com.

'More height'

Dear Editor:

The April 12 public meeting about a proposed apartment devel-

Letters to the Editor

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not only reject Ford's privatization plans but to also share the solutions, like repealing wage-suppression Bill 124 and increasing spending on public health care.

The premier claims he "loves nurses." If this were true, he wouldn't be taking them to court over the unconstitutional Bill 124, and then suppressing their wages, or giving our hospitals to private interests. This will absolutely affect you at some point in your future.

A resilient, well-funded, public health care system is crucial to our community, so let's make lots of noise about the tearing down of an already-suffering health care system. Tell Michael Chong and Ted Arnott that we oppose Bill 124 and privatization.

Gerry Walsh,
Erin

Small steps can help

Dear Editor:

I am a Canadian, born 92 years ago in Toronto. In the 1950s my family and I learned from writers such as Rachel Carson, Thomas Malthus and Charles Darwin that the natural world needed our attention.

Besides overpopulation, we in the north were overusing natural resources. The problem has not been fixed, and has become worse.

Our small family once had two cars. We soon learned how much better to use mass transit. We sold our cars – a relief. Unfortunately for some, transit is not convenient or cheap to use.

My handyman husband built a small solar collector of wood, glass and metal pipe, connected it to a tank in the basement, and placed it in our front yard. It gave all the hot water we needed for dishes, laundry, and bathing from April to October. Undoubtedly there are kits and patterns for building a solar collector.

New buildings should be situated for solar heating, with no windows on the north or east sides at this latitude.

Helen Hansen,
Guelph

'Help save the planet'

Dear Editor:

RE: Tax 'hurting people', April 20.

The carbon tax on propane went from \$0.0774/litre last year to \$0.1006/litre this year, an increase of \$0.0232/litre. The rest of the \$0.28/litre increase in the price of propane came from the propane company, not the carbon tax. People like to put all the blame for price increases on the carbon tax when it's simply not true.

The point of the increasing carbon tax is to encourage people to move away from burning fossil fuels and give them time to do so. That's why we weren't charged \$170/tonne CO2 from the beginning.

For people heating with propane, it makes sense to switch to an air exchange heat pump powered by electricity. Typically heat pumps give 3.5 units of heat energy output for each unit of energy input. That would drop a monthly heating bill from \$500 to about \$200/month, taking electricity costs into account. The cost of installing a heat pump



can be reduced by applying for a Greener Homes grant or by making use of a zero-interest, 10-year loan from the government. Even without help from the government, the monthly savings will soon pay for the heat pump.

Instead of complaining about the carbon tax, it would be better to save money, pay less carbon tax, retain more of the rebate and help save the planet.

Ron Moore,
Hillsburgh

'Two-fold benefit'

Dear Editor:

RE: Tax 'hurting people', April 20.

I really do feel for Janis Aubut, who wrote last week about the sharp increase in her propane heating bills. We too heated with propane until last winter (2021-22) and the expense was huge, at least \$700 to \$1,000 for the coldest months, December through February.

Since switching to an electric above-ground heat pump in November 2021, our hydro bills have gone up about \$200 to \$300 during those same cold months - but we've eliminated the enormous propane bills. In addition to big savings on home heating, gone is the fossil fuel pollution from burning propane.

Yes, the new heat pump system did cost more than a conventional fossil fuel furnace replacement, but the federal government's Greener Homes grant of \$5,000 has helped, and the new system will pay for itself within four or five years.

Since burning fossil fuels is the main driver of the climate crisis, taking the heat-pump step has a two-fold benefit: dramatically cutting household costs while greatly reducing our carbon footprint.

Liz Armstrong,
Erin

Need a parking garage?

Dear Editor:

Recently there has been much written, shared on Facebook and in presentations to Centre Wellington council that there is no parking in Fergus.

If we truly believe this to be true, then it is time for the community to come together and consider where we might put a parking garage, the size and scope of such a project and how we pay for such a project.

Given the amount of concern

over parking I think each of us need to give due consideration to such a project so that parking is not the only theme we hear when new projects are being considered for downtown Fergus.

Burna Wilton,
Centre Wellington

'Invasive fish'

Dear Editor:

I am a student at John Black Public School. There is a small species of invasive fish called the round goby, which lives in the Grand River. They eat the eggs of other fish, and may spread diseases to the creatures that eat them, which comes from the zebra mussels that they eat.

Canada has done not nearly enough to prevent them, only banning them as pets and bait for fishing. While they do have many predators, including walleye, yellow perch, and lake sturgeon, they reproduce very fast and produce up to 10,000 eggs per spawning. The only good thing about round gobies is the fact that they remove parasites from other fish, and even then, they produce offspring up to six times in one summer.

In order to stop the spread of these fish, one option is to empty our boats after fishing, in case they stow away. We as a community should support the Stop The Spread Program which is run by Trout Unlimited Canada, and hopefully we can drive these fish out of our water.

Omar Kridli,
Fergus

Electric buses

Dear Editor:

I am a 7th grader that goes to John Black Public School. I believe our government and some of the money siphoned to the school board through fundraising should go towards upgrading our environment-killing buses to slick electric buses that are environmentally healthy.

If school boards get electric buses then we wouldn't have to deal with the stench left behind by the exhaust. Also, eventually the buses would pay themselves off because they would not have to deal with the rising gasoline prices. The electric buses are also environmentally friendly and don't put strain on the environment, unlike gasoline buses which kill nature with pollution.

We would also be able to follow suit with America because President Joe Biden has donated a large sum of money towards upgrading buses. Electric buses also are more safe in some ways, which are a more low centre of gravity so the buses wouldn't flip as easily, fires are less likely, and electric vehicles have modernized crumple technology that reduces damage to the driver in case of a frontal collision.

Finally, if the bus were to flip, some electric vehicles have reinforced roofs. So please consider what I have written today. If not for you, for the environment.

Sebastian Krewenki,
Fergus

Just like Trump?

Dear Editor:

In the next election Canadians should think hard before voting for Pierre Poilievre and his Elon Musk "free speech," which like all good conservatives, means the exact opposite.

Poilievre happily referred the CBC to Elon Musk to have it declared a government propaganda new agency. Musk has also listed the BBC and NPR as government agencies.

Poilievre was so excited he stated, "Now people know that it is Trudeau propaganda, not news and I will defund the CBC." It's interesting that Musk has no problem with Russian news outlets - I wonder why?

Poilievre plans to turn Canada into a clone of Republican politics, with his being in bed with anti-vaxxers, law breakers and racists - and like Republicans, he offers no real policies. His will be a nasty government working on his enemies list. If you love Trump and Republicans you will love him.

Rumor has it Poilievre will appear in the documentary by that other great rich man, Tucker Carlson, on why the U.S. should invade Canada.

Republicans hate Canada since it is a nation, with all its problems, that believes in providing for its citizens and does not that have enough mass murders.

Nothing like "free speech" by Carlson, a proven liar, and Musk. By all means, let's let them tell us what is true and false.

Jim Trautman,
Simi Valley, California

WRITE OUT OF HER MIND

Kelly Waterhouse



Sticks

Marriage is hard. Working in a business together is harder. You both have to pick up sticks, but under no circumstances can you whack each other with them, even if you want to (visualization helps).

This is what I'm learning after my first winter living in the country: sticks seem to be everywhere. Big ones, skinny ones, long ones, short ones, and all of them need to be gathered.

It wasn't such a big task when we lived in town. We didn't have many trees. We didn't have too much yard either, although it always felt like it was a lot of work. I remember thinking, 'Wow, this is a big backyard, but there aren't a lot of sticks.' Huh. Look at me, foreshadowing.

That's back when the Carpenter commuted to the city, so when weekends arrived, he would happily spend them in our backyard, puttering about with make-work projects. Anything to stay put and not drive. I always knew it was his domain, and I was lovingly discouraged from helping. I was okay with that.

Now we're both together in a rural home and business with a lot of yard work to do and projects on the go in every direction, and he has to let me help him with some of them. He has no choice. He can't possibly do it alone (he *could* actually do it alone and would be a thousand times happier if left to do so, but teamwork makes the dream work, giggle).

It's a different dynamic for the Carpenter than running a job site. He is of the mindset, "If I want it done right, I'll do it myself." And he's not wrong. He just has to learn a new mindset: compromise. He loves that. You should see how much he loves that. His facial expressions sum up his unfettered joy when I offer to help with outdoor chores.

Bless his patient heart, he has reluctantly assigned me mundane tasks around the property that satisfy three of his "work-share with Kelly" criteria.

First, the task has to be basic enough that I can't break anything, make anything worse or get so frustrated that I quit, because in all of those scenarios, it will make his life more difficult.

Second, it needs to be important. I need to feel a sense of job satisfaction. I think my performance appraisal should include applause, but he won't play along.

Thirdly, he suggests a routine task that will bore me so I will eventually return to my own work on the computer inside the house, handling tasks he would never wish to share because it involves human interaction.

He tried to break my spirit with the task of stick gathering. I was to source random sticks throughout the property, pile them and use my knee to break the sticks at a certain length (determined by the bossy one), before placing them in an orderly fashion from north to south in the wheelbarrow. So many rules. I tossed one stick pointing from east to west just to mess with him, because he can't fire me.

Turns out I take more joy in retrieving sticks than a Labrador retriever ever could - and the reason for this is simple: my career has always been indoors, and now, I can go outside whenever I want to and run off my leash across acres of green space and forest.

I understand dogs so much better now. Sticks. Who knew?

Send letters to: editor@wellingtonadvertiser.com